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From Carpathian to Pindus

Tereza Stratilesco

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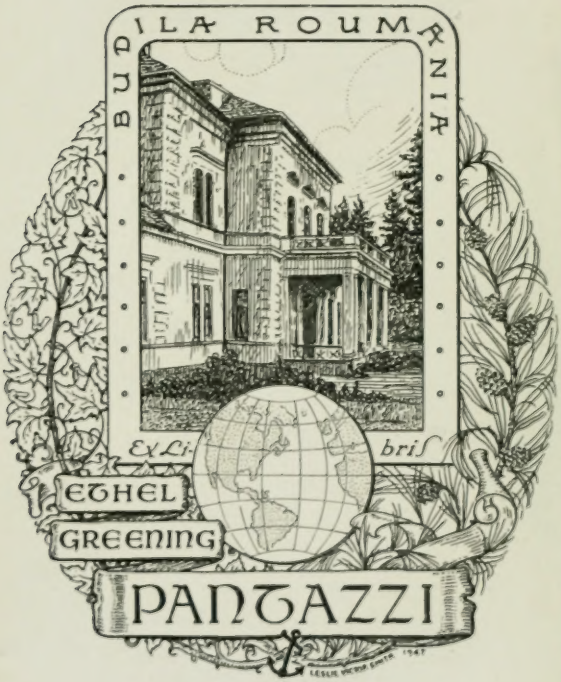

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FROM CARPATHIAN TO PINDUS

PICTURES OF ROUMANIAN COUNTRY LIFE

BY

TEREZA STRATILESCO

"Țaranii, partea cea mai numeroasă și mai interesantă a poporului român."—AL. LAHOVARY (Discurs parlamentar)

("The peasants, the most numerous and most interesting part of the Roumanian people")

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Preface

THE present book I address to the British public, who, during my stay in the United Kingdom, ever impressed me as eager to know and to learn, and who have plied me with hundreds of questions about the Roumanians, of whom indeed, and quite naturally, they knew but little. This volume is not intended as a book of controversy or polemics, it does not pretend to fight out the cause of the Roumanian nation, it simply aims at showing and describing what the Roumanian nation is, or at least the genuine and most interesting part of it, the peasants.

No moment seems more appropriate for putting it before the public than this very year, when the Roumanians are celebrating their eighteenth centenary in the Carpathian region, the fortieth anniversary of King Carol I. on the throne of Free Roumania, the thirtieth anniversary of her independence, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the young kingdom.

A national exhibition in Bucharest, opened for the occasion, will help to show the progress made by the nation at large. What would not this progress be, were it the result of a civilisation of eighteen centuries standing! But, out of the eighteen centuries, ten have to be deducted, having been filled by the unrelenting barbaric invasions of the Middle Ages; of the remaining eight hundred, more than seven centuries ought again to be taken out, as quite unprogressive, owing to Turkish suzerainty. Thus, what the Roumanian

exhibition will have to show will be only the progress accomplished in the last half-century, with the *union* of Free Roumania as foundation stone for all further progress. In 1859 *half* of the Roumanian nation were able to unite in the principality, afterwards the kingdom, of Roumania; in the last war, 1877–1878, under the glorious leadership of King Carol I., she won her independence, being thus entrusted by fate with the heavy responsibility of representing the nation before the world.

As to the war of independence, I do not think it can ever be made too much of. From the point of view of general history it may have been a small war, but for us Roumanians it has been a great war, a tremendous war. In order fully to realise its magnitude, let us imagine for one moment what might have become of us had we been beaten. Woe to us, for everything was at stake—union, liberty, our very existence! And we might have been beaten, for our army though brave (as it has proved to be) was small and untried on the battle-field as yet. But we have been victorious, and the achievement was entirely due to the wonderful ability and warlike skill of the present king, as has been acknowledged by all those competent to give an opinion on the matter. That is why the grateful people eagerly seizes every opportunity of feasting its king, and will always couple the name of Carol I. with the greatest names in history.

The connections of the Free Kingdom with foreign countries are many and ever developing. The Roumanian flag has now begun to fly far away over seas—this very year new lines are going to be inaugurated. Of the ships in course of being built this year for Roumania—ships built in foreign dockyards but on plans and under supervision of Roumanian engineers—two are christened with the historical names of *Imparatul Trajan* (Emperor Trajan) and *Dacia*, in memory of the deeds accomplished eighteen centuries back on the native ground of the Roumanian nation. "Good luck" to them, and may they long live to carry

far and wide the name of an ever greater Roumania, ever worthier of her great ancestors; may the national exhibition give a real insight into the power and ability of the Roumanian nation; may this book succeed in giving a true insight into the soul of the people!

T. S.

Jassy, Roumania,
April, 1906.

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INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL

I

"When God resolved to make the earth, He took a ball of warp and another of woof, and after calculating the heaven's size set to work, giving the ball of warp to the hedgehog to hold. But the cunning little beast let the ball go loose, so that the Creator, unawares, made an earth much too large to be fitted under the sky. What was to be done? The Almighty stood there, puzzled and annoyed, when the industrious bee came to the rescue. She quietly flew round the hiding-place of the hedgehog, and heard him say: 'H'm, if I were God, I would simply take the earth with both hands, crush it together, and thus produce on its surface mountains and valleys, and fit it under the sky.' The bee informed God of what she had heard, and He, following the hedgehog's hint, crushed the earth and gave it its present shape, with mountains, hills, and valleys, instead of the even surface He had at first decided upon."—*Roumanian Popular Tradition.*

THE Carpathian chain, in the shape of an irregular bow, somewhat crushed towards the south-east, leans with both ends on the Danube; one end in the region Vienna-Presburg, leaving off beyond the river, the last ramifications of the Alps, the other end bending again towards the Danube at the Iron Gates, which sever it from the north-western end of the Balkan: this as a general outline. As a matter of fact the Carpathians are made up of a number of chains and peaks, the south-eastern branch being, however, the longest and compactest of these chains. South of the Danube ramifications of the Carpathians and Alps, as well as simple independent

groups, make of the Balkan peninsula a mosaic of mountains and vales, a chief backbone, however, being traceable from the Balkan to the Pindus.

If in actual framework the Carpathians and Pindus yield the first rank to the mighty Alps, they have been better provided for with regard to their external aspect and with a warmer and greater richness of colour; they have also a most luxuriant vegetation. I wonder if there exists in Europe another region covered with an ampler or thicker cloak of forest, so far in great part untrodden by human foot. Beneath the trees a soft moss covers the ground, and beyond the forest region the region of the herbs begins, with a flora richer than any in Europe, which has made for generations the Carpathian region a dominion of the bees, a land of honey. The edelweiss is to be picked up in the Carpathians at only 640 m. high above sea-level; rare plants, like the Caucasian *Galium valantoides* are to be found in the Olt valley, side by side with the Siberian *Veronica Bachofeni*. Then the white and blue crocuses, coming out early in spring to trim with a gorgeous hem the white retreating cloak of snow on both Carpathian and Pindus; lower down, the hyacinth, the cowslip, the violet; and lowest of all, the rich variety of innumerable field flowers which make of the hay-field the most gorgeous mosaic of bright colours.

On such a carpet and under such shade still walk about in full enjoyment of life the heavy bear, feeding leisurely on the plentiful raspberries and strawberries, entirely unmindful of man picking the tasty fruit a few steps beyond; the wolf, hunting in herds, a dreadful nuisance in winter to man and beast, even into the villages down in the plain; the sly red fox, much hunted for its fur. The wild goat and the powerful buffalo are an extinct race now, leaving only their impressive names behind; the lynx and the marten are becoming rare, while the meek, timorous chamois is still to be met with in quiet, remote corners of the mountains. Endless herds of roes and stags are an easy quarry for the cruel wild boar, an ordinary inmate of the mountain slopes. Lower

own numberless quadrupeds of all sizes and appearnces, doing more or less harm to man and as much as hey can to their weaker fellow animals, fill with life the nost solitary fields and the darkest woods, whilst high bove them innumerable birds fill the forests with their nterminable concerts. Ruling and reigning over all, ven in the plain and especially about the Dobrogia, over the rapacious kings of the mountains, the hawks nd the eagles in close flocks, and often of enormous size. nsects in millions are there, some of them harmful, with utterflies such as might be expected in such flowery ay-fields. The clear mountain streams swarm with rout; the shad-fish in the Prut and the sturgeon in the Danube mouths and in the Black Sea, with its caviar nd isinglass, enjoy a worldwide renown.

Beside these living products on their surface, the nountains, both north and south of the Danube, contain n their bosom stores of mineral wealth, to a great extent nsounded as yet, little of it opened to man's use. The old mines of Hungary and Transylvania are the source f nearly the whole gold output in Europe, and it is otorious that they long ago produced more, and seem to ave abounded with gold in the Roman times. Salt nines, rich springs of petroleum and of mineral waters, re worked out with ever increasing success.

II

"Apa trage la matcă
și Românul la teapă."
("Water draws to its current
the Roumanian to his race.")

Mysterious and impenetrable as the Carpathian and Pindus are in many respects down to the present day, a o less thick veil hangs above the earliest inhabitants of he regions round about them. History has already ailed to find out the life and whereabouts of man in his arliest primitive stage in the world; archæology, which nas done so much in Western Europe, has spent but

little labour in the East as yet. The few poor, groping excavations have so far brought to light numerous spots containing large stores of primitive stone implements, spots to be found everywhere about the Carpathian, in Bukowina, Transylvania, Roumania, where these stations of stone and bronze implements, along with funeral tumuli, are to be counted by the hundred. Interesting though these finds may be, they have proved, however, quite unable to give an answer to the still unanswered question as to the beginnings of man and the cradle of the human race or races; nothing yet decisive on this point has been discovered in them, granting the supposition that the Carpathian region may have been the dwelling-place of man even as far back as the Palæolithic Period. But the last word is far from having been said on the subject: so much has already been discovered in the world that was never dreamt of before, and surely science has still in store secrets for human knowledge quite sufficient to keep alive an interest in life and lend it a peculiar worth and pleasantness for millions of years to come.

The stations just opened for digging are so many and so filled with primitive remains, that they might freely provide with valuable specimens all the public and private museums in Europe and beyond the seas, if only properly worked out. They contain numberless knives, axes, hatchets, lance and arrow-heads, made of either flint or grit-stone; the shapes are various: most of them are polished, some just only roughly cut. On account of the great predominance of the polished stone implements, the stations have been all attributed to the Neolithic Period only. Besides the stone objects a large supply of earthenware ones are found, moulded of rough clay, with the traces of the maker's fingers on them; pots and jars, and nameless hooks and things supposed to have been used in fishing and spinning; and finally a great number of idols and amulets, of the funniest shapes and designs. To the same epoch seem to belong a number of tumuli, in which skeletons have been found together with only stone and clay implements. Many stations again, with

tumuli, are undoubtedly of the Bronze Period: all sorts of weapons, of house and field implements; also many ornamental objects, like pins, clasps, armbands, necklaces, beads, chains, and again a lot of idols of all sorts and shapes, real or allegorical. The pottery of this epoch bears witness of great advance in that art too, and as to design, it is supposed to belong to no less a family than the Mykene pottery.

The Carpathians seem to be gaining a new importance, and consequently hold a more interesting place in history, by the latest assumption of the savants, that these mountains may have rocked on their powerful bosom the Aryan race.

Thus, with just a suspicion as to the paternity of the Aryans about them, the Carpathians have been waiting in the dark a good long while, until the dawn of civilisation shed its first beams upon them, and it was from the South that these came. As is generally known, the first light of civilisation came upon Europe from the Orient, brought through those Britishers of old, the Phœnicians, the great merchants of antiquity; this civilisation developed first in Greece, whence it spread northward and westward, arousing to new life the peoples as it went along—the Macedonians, the Romans afterwards, but leaving still at a lower stage the Thracians, those remote neighbours in the north occupying the ground, from the Bosphorus and Hellespont northwards over both shores of the Danube, up to the Carpathians, and meeting in the west with the Illyrians, who in their turn, mixed with Celtic tribes, reached as Celto-Illyrians or *Skipetars* the shore of the Adriatic Sea. Lower down on the ladder of civilisation were the Thracians' brothers, the *Agathyrses*, dwellers of the Carpathian mountains, and lower still their remoter relatives and neighbours, the Scythians, nominal masters of the plains extending from the Danube far into the east, to the Caspian and Aral lake. By the end of the fourth century, however, these latters' power having been overthrown by the Sarmates, in the eastern region of the Dniester, two Thracian tribes, the Dacians and the Getes, came thence to the front as

masters of the Danube valley, whose actual inhabitants they long since had been under Scythian rule. As their power stretched northwards the whole Carpatic region took the name of Dacia.

In the course of time Greece, then Macedonia, had played its part in the world's history. A new power arose—Rome—which from Italy was to stretch out her grasping hands to the four points of the compass. Her conquests towards the East only are of import to us here, namely, that of the Balkan peninsula, which was made by very slow steps only, pressing along with it the Roman influence all along the Danube valley, whilst the south of the peninsula was developing under the stronger Greek influence. Now across the Danube wars with the Dacians easily ensued, and the final result was the conquest of Dacia by the Romans, 106 A.D.

The Roman province of Dacia was formed of the *Banat* of to-day, the *Oltenia*—or western part of Valachia down to the Olt—and the plateau of Transylvania proper, which, like a natural stronghold, became the centre and the basis of the Roman domination and the focus of its influence in those parts. On almost all sides the new territory acquired was surrounded by barbarians. To defend the new province against them, Trajan founded military stations on the slopes; around and from these stations Roman influence spread out beyond the area of the actual province.

After the conquest of Dacia, Roman influence and civilisation covered like one single sheet both shores of the Danube, less potent, of course, in proportion as it reached a greater distance from the centre of the Empire, but Dacia, was, nevertheless, an exception in this respect, and there were strong reasons for the fact that Romanisation was more complete here than anywhere else. Indeed, we know that many Romans had settled there before the conquest—we must not forget that Dacia was the California of those days of scarcity of gold—and Trajan himself brought here colonists from every part of his immense empire, but much more, of course, from the eastern regions, as innumerable inscriptions found in

Dacia bear witness to the present day. Still more colonists came of their own private initiative, attracted by the riches of Dacia. Roman life, Roman usages, Roman civilisation were introduced into the Carpathians, and in short time the Dacians, who still remained after the conquest, accepted the Roman rule, and were Romanised and thoroughly mixed with the Roman colonists. Fine towns arose, and Roman life unfolds itself in Dacia as in Italy. Romanised Dacians were admitted into the Roman armies, like the *cohorta I Aelia Dacorum* settled in Britannia, the England of to-day, and many others. The "flying dragoon" of the old Dacian flag is preserved on the Daco-Roman arms, together with the bent sword, also a Dacian weapon.

For a century and a half Dacia was part and parcel of the Empire, quite long enough for the Romanising of a province which, like Dacia, attracted such crowds of settlers, more even than the emperors were willing to allow. Indeed, it is notorious that even Trajan was loth to let so many colonists go away from Italy, as the Roman element in that country was only too diminished already; nevertheless, inscriptions are there to testify that a great many of the settlers came from Italy, the very heart of the Empire.

Whilst Roman civilisation was thus taking lasting root in the Carpathians, aided by the richness of the soil, the increasing commerce, and the natural fortifications of Dacia, south of the Danube in the Pindic region, Romanisation, strangled by the Greeks, was slowly but surely dying out. The Pindus was far from affording as suitable a soil for the thriving of Roman seed as the Carpathian did.

If for a century and a half Dacia was a Roman province, her life was far from being a quiet, uniform one all this time, and, following Trajan, emperor after emperor had to repel ever recurring invasions of the eastern and northern barbarian neighbours. One Roman writer tells us that the immediate successor of Trajan was so disgusted with the constant struggles he had to maintain for the preservation of Dacia—the more so as Adrian was

by no means a warrior—that he was inclined simply to renounce the conquests of his predecessor. He was, however, dissuaded from this by his counsellors, who insisted that "it would be a great pity to leave so many Roman citizens helpless against the barbarians"—an argument which clearly implied that if the Emperor deserted Dacia, the citizens would not. Thus Dacia continued its life still under the wing of Roman rule.

But the invasions continued relentlessly; from the time of Caracalla (211–217) the Goths began their incursions, which soon became so troublesome that at the time of Gallienus the province was already looked upon as lost for the Empire. Its actual renunciation was, however, resolved upon about the year 271 by the Emperor Aurelianus (270–275), so that for about half a century Dacia was the platform of continual battles between the Roman legions and the barbarian invaders. In this half-century of extreme hardship, what were these peaceful Daco-Roman provincials to do? To wait serenely to be overcome and plundered by the wild invader? To go away looking for more propitious *penates?* No doubt a good many of the well-to-do class gathered together their capital and movable wealth, and left Dacia for safer regions of the Empire. But what could the poor do? Their homesteads destroyed, their tilled lands ravaged, what could they do but look for safety somewhere for themselves and the few heads of cattle or sheep they may have been able to save from the enemy? But where were they to go? The right bank of the Danube was just as badly ravaged by the Goths as the left bank; in fact, most of the bloodiest battles took place there; so that really there was no escape for the poor provincials, except to the top of the mountains, where the barbarian invaders never cared to go, whether in the Carpathians or elsewhere. To the mountains, then, they went like the fair Dokia *

* The remembrance of Trajan's conquest the Roumanian people has preserved in the following tradition faithfully handed down from father to son: "Decebalus had a sister, Dokia; she was fair and pleased the Roman Emperor. In order to escape his pressing suit, the fair princess fled to the mountains, and disguised herself in the

of old, and, like her, became shepherds. In the mountains they found a safe shelter for themselves, and fertile *poïanas* (glades) for their flocks, keeping in their turn safe from oblivion the very name of the Carpathian, many of the peaks bearing still to-day the name of *Carpatin*. Beside this name, the older one of *Caucasus mons* has also been preserved by the people in the mount Cocan by the River Olt. They named one of the mountains, or perhaps rather preserved its name, as *Muntele Chrestianilor* ("the mountain of the Christians") preserved in its popular Latin form down to the present day, when the Roumanian says no more "chrestianus" but "creshtin"; they kept alive the Latin names of various other peaks: the *Detunata*, with its crown of basaltic pillars, the *Gaïna*, the *Marmura* mountains. Wandering at random over hills and over streams, they must have often dreamed of the past ages, of the conditions of life created for them by past generations, and have evoked in fancy the great figure of Trajan. His name they have actually preserved in the "Trajan's table," "Trajan's prairie," "Trajan's walls," eventually handed down in the common word *troian*, drift of snow, gathered by the wind in a shape very much like the walls made by Trajan; they have also preserved it in the very name of the Milky Way, called by the Roumanian people *Calea lui Trajan* ("Trajan's road"). They have saved from oblivion the names of the Dacian Cerna, of the Bersava, Motru, Olt, &c., down to the Scythian rivers, Prut, Siret, Argesh, Muresh, and down further to the Dacian "cloud bearer" *Dunare* (the Greek *Ister*) of which the Romans have made *Danubius*.

When Aurelianus decided upon the desertion of Dacia there was practically not much left for him to desert. Dacia having been really in the hands of the Goths for the last ten years, Aurelianus transferred the province formally to them, as federates of the Empire, however, which means that the Empire had not altogether given up

simple dress of a shepherdess. But Trajan pursued her, overtook her and was on the point of seizing her, when she prayed her pagan gods to save her, and they turned her and her sheep into stones."

any claim on that province. These federates had as chief obligation to protect the frontier of the Empire against other invasions. The two Roman legions settled in Dacia for her defence ever since Trajan, were called back by Aurelianus; they crossed the Danube. In their rear there may have marched off a fairly large crowd of magistrates and officials dependent on the Roman Government; many monied people also, who could do no more business in deserted, unsafe Dacia, under the depredating power of the Goths, went too, very likely, followed by a good many of their hangers-on. These settled down on the right bank of the Danube, in the middle of Moesia—a small region made up of the east of Servia and the west of Bulgaria—which received henceforth the name of *Aurelian's Dacia*, while the old Dacia remained under the name of *Trajan's Dacia*. Thus came the first split between members of the same family. In their continual wanderings up-hill and down-hill the Daco-Romans who remained behind in the north may still have communicated with their brothers across the Danube, but to what extent and for how long no one can say. Between the flooding waves of repeated Germanic and Mongolian invasions, which were to follow for ten successive centuries, which invasions came like storms and like storms passed away, uprooting, of course, from the foundation Roman institutions and Roman civilisation, the Daco-Romans, retiring from the low places before the flood of Barbarians, managed to reach the heights, the mountains, where they could keep alive and evolve slowly into the Roumanians of the present day.

For a thousand years the chief abode of the Roumanians has been the lofty summits of the Carpathians on one side, of the Balkan, Rhodope, and Pindus on the other. For a thousand years thirty generations at least of Roumanians have led the wandering pastoral life, each handing down to the next one a fainter and fainter memory of the past, each burying along with itself something more of the Roman civilisation. Civilisation has died out. Since then there has been no more education provided for the wandering Roumanian mountaineer;

that is, no conventional education, but a great teacher has been there in the shape of grand, mighty Nature, presiding on the heights, under whose influence the Roumanian's character has been moulded; his habits, his beliefs, his superstitions formed, in proportion as he has tried in his infantine way to spell out great Nature's book. On those heights did the Roumanian nation take a lasting shape—the mountains are the creators as well as the cradle of the Roumanian nation.

III

"Apa trece petrele rămân."
("The water passes, the stones remain.")

The first invasions, as already seen, preceded by half a century the desertion of the Dacian province. The first to come were the Goths, who from 250 A.D. were to be found everywhere, south as well as north of the Danube. After the Goths, the Huns, who established themselves in the plains of Tissa, and under Attila were the nominal masters of Central Europe from the Rhine to the Volga. Behind them, the Slav race, little known yet, except through its modest offshoots sent right and left from the large main trunk lying in the east of Europe, began to move now, in slow but steadfast waves from east towards west and south. The Asiatic invasions gave an impulse towards the dismemberment of this agricultural, peaceful Slav race, which henceforth, up to the seventh century, will do nothing but expand, and fill all mid-Europe and the Balkan peninsula, covering the whole ethnographic prospect. This mighty wave of Slav invasion—overwhelming the plain—severed for ever the Daco-Roman brothers. Moreover, it brought about a further split: a branch of these Daco-Romans—lovers of the heights—in their bewilderment at the invasion, were driven back up the Danube as far as the mountains of Istria. At the same time, the Daco-Romans, south of the Danube, soon had also to leave

Aurelian's Dacia for a refuge on the heights, where they also took to pastoral life, and in face of recurrent invasions, under the necessity of ever new and ever larger pastures too, drifted away from Balkan to Rhodope, and from Rhodope to Pindus. A congenial element they may have found in the descendants of the old Roman settlers in these regions, and, owing especially to the early stage of the language—still pretty much the popular Latin—must have mixed with these, their number must have increased in the course of time, and so no wonder that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries not only Byzantine but also western Writers call Thessaly *Great Valachia*, Etholy and Acarnany *Small Valachia*.

A new wave of Germanic race, the Ostrogoths and the Gepides, passed over; after them again a Mongolic wave, the Avars, who took possession of the ground by destroying the former occupants. Thus were the barbarians struggling with each other for the Carpathian plains, while the Roumanian shepherd could look quietly at their bloody struggles, and, leaning on his crook above on the heights, "abide his time." The Avars' nominal domination of Central Europe was overthrown only by Charles the Great, who entirely defeated them. But their invasion had been a fierce one. A great many Slavs took to flight from the plains before them, and found a shelter in the hospitable Carpathians. There they met the Roumanians, whom they probably already had known slightly during the rare moments of respite between the invasions when the Roumanians could venture down into the lower valleys. They got to know each other better now in moments of danger, when the Slavs were driven up the mountains by the Avars. Slavs and Roumanians, undergoing almost the same conditions of life, met on friendly terms, lived side by side, and mingled. The Roumanians neutralised and Romanised the Slav element; the Roumanian language was enriched with a great many Slav words, but remained none the less a neo-Latin language in grammar and spirit. Whilst this fusion was going on in the mountains, down in the deserted valleys new waves of Slavs

rushed behind the Avaric invasion, making still more complete the separation between Carpathian and Balkan Roumanians.

At the end of the fifth century a third wave of Mongols, the Bulgarians, had stepped over the Oural into Europe. They repeatedly knocked at the Byzantine door but without any success, and, up to the seventh century, they were obliged to live on the northern shore of the Black Sea, under the yoke of the powerful Avars, but then they freed themselves—helped to some extent by the Valachians, whose friendship they had won in the meanwhile, and became now dangerous to Byzantium. In 671 part of them crossed the Danube; *Aurelian's Dacia*, *Moesia inferior*, and *Scythia minor* (the Dobrogia) fell under their power together with the population of the plain, made up of Slavs, addicted to agriculture, whilst the Roumanians, addicted to pastoral life, were driving their herds from *poïana* to *poïana* from Balkan to Rhodope, from Rhodope to Pindus, ever southward bound, in proportion as Nature seemed kinder and the danger of the invasion less pressing. Thus from Carpathian to Pindus the general outlook was about the same: in the plains, agricultural Slavs, in the mountains, pastoral Roumanians; but the conditions of life in the two sets of mountains were different. While the Carpathian offered a natural stronghold to the frightened fugitive, and ample supply of food for his flocks in its extensive glades, the Balkan-Pindic region, with its narrow dispersed ridges and its small glades offered opportunity for only a much harder kind of life. The Carpathian Roumanians, in their simple, patriarchal life, could thrive and multiply and fill the mountains to such an extent that an overflow beyond was possible further on. The Southern Roumanian settled also his *catune* ("hamlets") on the heights, but had to roam much farther for pastures for their flocks of sheep, goats, and horses, and got, after all, a scantier living. But whilst the Northern Roumanians mixed with Slavs and easily assimilated them, the Southern Roumanians were much more under

the grip of Greek influence, which was a conscious one, and accordingly worked consciously, and the only thing to wonder at is that they did not disappear quicker and entirely. This only proves the persistent vitality of the Roumanian nation.

Now by the end of the seventh century the region between Danube and Balkan was conquered by the Bulgarians, who, under Asparuch, founded a state with great fortunes in prospect, and having the Slavs for their subjects. But it came to pass, as in many other similar cases, that the masters were conquered by their subjects, morally, for, although not civilised themselves, the Slavs were much less barbarous than the Bulgarians. Asparuch's successors soon mastered a large part of the Avaric possessions, after the Avars had been overthrown by the Franks, who, busy afterwards in their own land, paid little attention thereafter to the Tissa valley. A precise dividing line between Frankish and Bulgarian dominion is hard to draw, but we may fairly assume that the Tissa with its banks was a kind of neutral ground between both; beyond that, in the east, Transylvania and Valachia were subdued, in a friendly way, it appears, by the Bulgarians. A common fate seems to have been trying to draw near the two branches of the Roumanian nation, for the Bulgarians, masters now of the Carpathian as well as of the Balkan, in successful struggles with the Byzantine Emperors, reached down to the gates of Constantinople, and most of the Roumanians were under Bulgarian rule.

But the Bulgarians were destined to play a much more important part in Roumanian life, for in the ninth century they were converted to Christianity, and the form of Bulgarian worship with the Bulgarian (*i.e.*, Slav) language to be used in church was imposed on all throughout the Empire, including the Roumanians. This Slav language, in Church and State, was preserved by the Roumanians down into the seventeenth century. By this the Roumanians have been cut off from western Latin civilisation, and, although the Roumanians never

knew or spoke the Slav language, they were none the less prevented from partaking in the Western culture, and were arrested for centuries in their natural development towards civilisation.

In the meanwhile a fourth wave of Mongolians had come in view: the Hungarians, who, after taking up a transient abode in the region between the Dniester and the Pruth, raged round, devastating and plundering, now in the Byzantine, now in the Bulgarian Empire, until the diplomatic Greek understood the advantage of using the barbarians against each other, and fraternised with by far the wildest of the two. At the end of the ninth century the Hungarians left the Dniester and came to settle down in the valley of the Tissa, whence they made for a time Western Europe shudder with their savage invasions. Behind their back a fifth Mongolian people, the Petchenegues, took possession of the Dniester valley, having close by on their heels their brothers, the Cumans; they occupied the valley of the Pruth also, their farthest point west being Silistria, on the Danube. The situation of the Bulgarian Empire then became precarious, and still more so when the Hungarians, beaten repeatedly in the west by the German monarchs, cast an envious eye eastward, and began their attacks upon old Dacia.

Whilst the Hungarians were pushing on in this way, the Bulgarians had also to deal with the Byzantines, and under rather adverse conditions, for after the great Bulgarian Tzar Simeon his successors were weak, and the decadence of the Bulgarian Empire had begun. However, they resisted, but at last Basile II. succeeded in completely defeating the Bulgarians, and the boundary of the Byzantine Empire was once more pushed to the Danube (1018).

The Bulgarian Empire having fallen to pieces, no wonder that the Hungarians took advantage of the event to lay hands on its western parts, and by the middle of the eleventh century they were able to inscribe among their possessions the whole of the Carpathian plateau, under the name of *Provincia*

Transylvana, some one century and a half after their arrival in the valley of the Tissa. And it was not without a struggle. Small chiefs—some of them Roumanians—*Voyevodes* and *Kneazes*, remnants of the Bulgarian organisation, took upon them the defence of the country; they fought bravely and long, but were overthrown. In these struggles the Roumanians took part, of course; some of them were scattered as far as the mountains of Moravia, where a remnant of them is to be met with to-day, entirely Slavisized. In truth, by this time the Roumanians were in a good way of becoming the only people indigenous to the Carpathians, the Slavo-Bulgarian element having been gradually sucked up by them—somewhat as the Normans were swallowed by the Anglo-Saxon.

By the end of the eleventh century the Petchenegues also came over the body of the prostrate Bulgarians, and were face to face with the Hungarians, and again the barbarians fought with each other for the Roumanian ground. The Petchenegues were easily defeated between Hungarians and Cumans; their remnants were admitted as settlers in Transylvania and Hungary. The struggle became now the keener between the Cumans, who covered the outer slopes of the Carpathians, and the Hungarians, who, in their great need of defending the approaches to Transylvania, settled in the east of it the Secklers, or boundary settlers, who still live in the east of Transylvania to-day under the name of *Secui*. Not much later the Hungarian kings filled the lowest valleys of the plateau with German settlers, the Saxons, or *Sashi*, as they are called by the Roumanians, who played an important part in the settling down of Western civilisation in these parts. Up to the thirteenth century the state of things was nearly the same in the region of the Carpathians: the Roumanians on the mountains, the Hungarians fighting at their feet with the Cumans. But the Cumans were a milder kind of Mongols, being Christians, and on this account Roumanians and Slavs found it possible to live side by side with them. Thus, during the domination of the Cumans in the plains round

the Carpathians, the Roumanians began again, this time with more lasting success, to filter down along the slopes to the outskirts of the mountains, to the hilly region, and to settle down into some form of government, as they had a remembrance of in their voyevodal and kneazial organisation of yore—they were modestly taking to housekeeping for themselves. In the meanwhile, the Slavs were ever quietly filling the plains along the rivers Dniester, Prut, and Danube. So they were found by the last Mongolian invaders in the thirteenth century, by the Tartars.

In the meantime it was the lot of the Roumanians south of the Danube to play a much more important part in history. Namely, in 1185, the Byzantine emperor, Isaack Angelus, celebrating his wedding with a young Hungarian princess, emptied the imperial treasury of its last penny. New taxations, meant to bring in new revenues, were levied on the people, chiefly in cattle and sheep, and these pressed rather more roughly on the mountain herdsmen. These we know to have been Roumanians in overwhelming numbers. A deputation was sent to the Emperor with two Roumanian brothers at its head, Petru and Assan. They fared ill at court, and coming back discontented, they provoked a rising of the Roumanians, in which the equally discontented Bulgarians readily joined. The Assans took the leadership. Beaten, they fled across the Danube, came back again with help from the Cumans and from the Roumanians, who in the Oltenia seem to have preserved their independence ever since the overthrow of the old Bulgarian Empire, defeated the Byzantines, and with so brilliant a result that the Bulgarians and Roumanians once more became free, and once more organised a free State under the name of the "Valacho-Bulgarian" Empire, with the Assan dynasty on the throne. The greatest among them was the third brother *Ionitză* ("Little John"), who received the imperial crown from the Pope, Innocent III., on the promise that he would accept for himself and his Empire the Roman Catholic Faith. But the Assan family died out soon, in its male

members at least, through violent death mostly; Bulgarians came to the throne. The Roumanians were put aside little by little; the Empire became more and more considered as Bulgarian only, and it was under that name that it fell under the Turks later on in the fourteenth century. This was the last sign of life given in history by the Southern Valachs; henceforth their voice is silenced, their name falls into oblivion; they step aside and keep to their humble pastoral life.

The last invasion over the Oural came in 1223; the Tartars, under Batu-Chan, devastating Russia and Poland, ravaged Transylvania and Hungary. The effects of this dreadful invasion were overwhelming; the populations were massacred, every kind of wealth was plundered or destroyed. At first they were resisted, and by Roumanians, too, amongst whom one chief of the Bassarab family ruling the Oltenia was conspicuous. By this time the existence of the Roumanians in the Carpathians and on their outer slopes is indeed proved by several contemporary documents. Quite in the north, in the mountainous Marmorosh, there was such a powerful element already, that in the beginning of the next century we find them emigrating towards the open valleys of Moldavia. Roumanians in the Bukovina, on the frontiers of Galicia, are mentioned in Byzantine writers as far back as 1164. Lower down there were also Roumanians, mentioned also in papal letters as "would-be Christians" (Greek Orthodox), whom the Cuman Catholic bishops were enjoined to try to convert to the "true faith" (Roman Catholicism). Farther west, on the southern slopes of the Carpathians, Roumanians are mentioned as being organised in small states, under a voyevode or a kneaz, the most important of these states being the voyevodate of Oltenia, on the right bank of the Olt. Thus the outer slopes of the Carpathian chain were girdled from the Iron Gates up into the Bukovina with a continuous Roumanian population on the way to get more and more into official state-life. The plains were covered with mostly unorganised masses of Slavs; these Slavs have been all Romanised in

time by the Roumanians, who, from their small rudiments of states on the hills, combined in the two states of Valachia and Moldavia, stretching from the Carpathians to the Danube and Dniester respectively. The period of invasion is ended; real state life now begins for the Northern Roumanians.

IV

"Să nu dea Dumnezeu Românului cît poate rabda."
("May God never give the Roumanian as much as he can bear!")

Night and mystery still involve the coming into existence of the Valachian State. Its very name, *Muntenia*, seems to point out an origin from beyond the mountains, Valachia being otherwise mostly a flat country. A tradition even, which, however, can by no means boast of any originality, contrives to show that the founders of the State came over from Transylvania. On the other hand, it is also held—and on stronger motives—that the foundation of the Valachian principality is due to the fact that the voyevode of Oltenia, on the western bank of the Olt, conquered the eastern regions also, from the Tartars, extending his dominion up to the mouths of the Danube.

Moldávia, no longer exposed to the Tartar invasions, began, however, to be visited by Roumanians from the Marmorosh, who, finding the hills suited them, settled down, their first voyevode, Dragosh, respecting, however, his former ties with the Hungarian kings. But in 1349 another voyevode, Bogdan, from Marmorosh also, came with followers, overthrew Dragosh's successors, and taking hold of the country shook off at the same time the Hungarian yoke. That is the foundation of Moldavia. It has been stamped on the memory of the Moldavian people and faithfully handed down through generations in the following genuine tradition:—

A young voyevode from Maramuresh, Dragosh-vodă, going a-hunting in the mountains with his suite, was led

astray by a buffalo, a *bour* or *zimbru*, and running after him, arrived in a beautiful hilly region, where he overtook the buffalo at a place where now lies a village with the suggestive name of *Boureni* (*bou* = ox). In the river flowing by, the voyevode's dog Molda was drowned, hence the name of river and country, "Moldova." The voyevode, finding the country both fair and fertile, settled down in it with his followers; the head of the buffalo remained ever after on the escutcheon of Moldavia.

The two principalities of Valachia and Moldavia have each its separate history, but absolutely similar on the whole. The whole first period of four or five centuries is full of wars, and successful ones too; it is their heroic period: wars with the Hungarians for both states; with the Poles for Moldavia; with the Turks, for Valachia first, for Moldavia afterwards. With the Bulgarian and Servian states beyond the Danube, their relations were of the best; marriages took place more than once between the ruling families; the whole organisation of the State was borrowed from the Bulgarians by the Valachs, and from these by the Moldavians; old Bulgarian, or rather Slavonian, became the State language, as it was already that of the Church; the form of State documents was adopted wholesale from the Bulgarians, along with the pro-title "Io" for the voyevodes (from *Ion*, *Ionitza*, the Valacho-Bulgarian Emperor), thus getting back what belonged to their own blood through foreign hands. Of all the wars, those with the Turks were the longest of all, and no more happy in the long run.

The first struggles of the Valachians with the Turks are, for the first period, summed up in the names of two warlike voyevodes—Mirtchea the Great, the conspicuous representative of the cause of civilisation and Christendom in the East against the all-invading Turk; and the cruel but able ruler, Vlad the Impaler.

But the chief cause of continuous wars in the principalities was a home trouble, namely, the succession to the throne, which was not handed down in the line of the

first-born, but was open to all sons, even natural sons and brothers, from which the country had the right to choose the successor of the deceased monarch—by right, the eldest of them, it seems. Hence wars between the pretenders, division of the country into parties, interference of foreigners, called in by one or the other of the pretenders. Moldavian princes admitted more than once Polish supremacy; Valachia bent its neck very early under Turkish power, becoming at first tributary, and then actual vassal, after Vlad the Impaler.

Notwithstanding all the wars, the people seem to have been fairly prosperous. The height of Moldavia's splendour is reached in the second half of the fifteenth century, under the reign of Stephen the Great, "the athlete of Christ," as the Pope called him, at the time when the whole of Christendom was shaking with fear before the all-conquering Islam. Stephen the Great, the much admired monarch, has been sung in many a popular ballad, of which scraps only may find room here:—

"Stephen, Stephen, the great lord,
Has no equal in the world
Except the splendid sun!
From Sutcheava when he rises
He sets his breast to the frontiers
Like a strong defensive wall.
His own arm incessantly
Beats the Tartarian hordes,
Beats the Maghiaric hosts,
Beats the Poles in stormy flight,
Beats Turks astride on dragoons *

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* "Ştefan, Ştefan, domn cel mare
Samăn pe lume nu are
Decît numai mândrul soare!
Din Suceava cînd răsare
Pune pieptul la hotare
Ca un zid de aparare.
Braţul lui fără' ncetare
Bate ordele tatare,
Bate cetele maghiare,
Bate Leşi din fuga mare
Bate Turcī pe zmei calare

And saves them the cost of burial.
The whole world is in amaze :
The land is small, the land is strong,
And the foe cannot progress ! " *

Stephen the Great, the beloved hero, who has more than one claim to the devotion of his people, the majestic warrior, is supposed to have had falcons for his sentries perched on heights and warning him of the approach of the enemy, to which warning he replies :—

" Let them come, oh, let them come
And give themselves a prey to me !
Death grazes them like a flock,
An ill fate drives them from behind.
Many have come to us in times,
Few, however, have returned [home] ;
For I am a four-handed Roumanian,
And have cures for all the pagans :
For Tartars I have an arrow,
For the Turks my own broad sword ;
For Lithuans my heavy mace,
For Hungarians a lasso ! " †

The name of Stephen the Great is a household name in every Moldavian cottage. He belonged to the greatest Moldavian dynasty, the Mushatini, related, it is said, to the Valachian dynasty of the Bassarabs ; his father, his grandfather (Alexander the Good), and his great-grandfather had all reigned in Moldavia ; his father only for a

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* Şi-i scuteşte de' ngropare.
Lumea 'ntreagă e'n mirare :
Ţara-i mică, ţara-i tare
Şi duşmanul spor nu are ! "

† " Las' să vie, las' să vie
Să se deie pradă mie !
Moartea-i paşte ca pe-o turmă
Pacatu-i mână din urmă.
Mulţi au mai venit la noi
Puţini s'au dus înapoi
Că-s Român cu patru mâni
Şi am leacuri de păgâni :
De Tatari am o săgeată,
De Turci pala mea cea lată ;
De Litveni un buzdugan
Şi de Unguri un arcan."

short time, being overthrown by a *protégé* of the Poles. It was not, however, by inheritance that Stephen got his throne, but through war, supported by the Valachian prince, Vlad the Impaler. This involved him in long and recurrent wars with the Poles and the Hungarians; he overcame them. Later on, however, owing to the Turkish wars, he accepted for a short time the suzerainty of Poland, the greatest European Power in those times!

After driving out his opponent, Stephen took possession of the throne, "with the will of the people," and ruled the country for half a century (1457–1504), always with sword in hand, a pillar of his country against its neighbours, a bulwark of Christianity against the Turks, as two more Roumanians had been before him, in this same century—Ioan Corvin de Huniade, Regent of Hungary, and Vlad the Impaler, already mentioned. The innumerable battles won by Stephen are celebrated in forty churches which he built all over the country, many of them mere ruins to-day. After each successful battle, tradition reports, Stephen was wont to raise a church in commemoration of it; one of the most important of them is the church—with monastery—of Putna, in Bukovina, which became the necropolis of the Moldavian monarchs.

Stephen's reign was the climax of the heroic period of Moldavia's history. After him downfall followed soon. The situation of the country between the two ill-disposed neighbours, Poland and Hungary, became so awkward that Stephen's son Bogdan, in accordance with his father's advice, decided to seek pagan support rather than lean any longer on fickle and false Polish friendship, "for the Turk is strong and wise, and keeps his word"—such seems to have been at the time the character of the powerful Turk. A Moldavian deputation sent to Constantinople accepted the Turkish suzerainty, as Valachia had already done long before. The first capitulations of Moldavia with the Turks were as fair as can be: Moldavia had to pay a yearly *peshkesh* ("a present") of 4,000 ducats, and give besides 40 hawks, 40 Moldavian mares, and military help in case of war. The Turks, in

return, recognised Moldavia as a "free and non-submitted country," and promised to respect her religion and laws, never to settle down in the country, nor to raise Moslem places of worship. Such were the conditions of Moldavia's vassalage in the year 1513. But they were not to be respected long. The century had not run out when the Turks were already meddling with the nomination of the princes; they increased the *peshkesh* which took the character of a real tribute, *haraci*, and seized the line of the Dniester, making in the strongholds of Cetatea-Albă, Bender, Soroca, Hotin, their centres of operations against the Poles, and afterwards against the Russians. This tendency of the Turks ever to trespass on the initial capitulations turned Roumanian policy in time towards Russian alliances.

Valachia had made her capitulations with the Turks much earlier. After the death of Mircea the Great (1418) the country fared ill under the long struggles for the crown among his descendants, and the interference of Hungary on one side and Turkey on the other. After the first capitulations with the light *peshkesh*, Valachia very soon fell under the obligation of paying, beside the money tribute, a blood tribute of 500 children yearly, who were to become dreaded *Ianitcheri* (Turkish infantry). Vlad the Impaler saved the country from this cruel tribute for a while, but unfortunately was overcome and lost his throne; and the Turks put his brother Radu in his stead on the Valachian throne, assuming thus the right of nominating the country's voyevodes. Thus, whilst Moldavia was prospering under great Stephen's rule, Valachia was already in a bad state. The Turkish interference in her affairs became heavier and heavier; the struggle for the thrones became keener than ever; the different pretenders got into the habit of buying the throne with money from the Turks. But the fate of the two countries was not long to be different, for, soon after Bogdan, Moldavia was reduced to Valachia's condition.

Nevertheless, Turkish authority, if willingly accepted by the princes, was not undisputed throughout these countries; a prince nominated by the Turks had often

to ascend his throne only after a hard fight; Turks, Tartars from Crimea, Cossacks from beyond the Dniester, over and over again overran the countries, bringing misfortune and desolation on the poor population. These unspeakable sufferings of the people made them deeply feel what a great mistake it is to allow foreigners to meddle with home troubles:—

"Who brings armies into the country,
May he die under the country's curse!"*

While fate was thus pressing with a heavy hand on the Roumanians of the free—that is, once free—principalities, the Western Roumanians were not happier under Hungarian rule. After the conquest of Transylvania many of the nobility passed over to the conqueror, and so it came to pass that the Roumanian blood gave Hungary her greatest general, Ioan Corvin de Huniade, and her greatest king, Mathias Corvin, son of the former, just as the trans-Danubian Roumanians had given the Bulgarians their greatest leader and monarch, Ionitză, two centuries before.

Many of the Roumanian chiefs, in order to preserve their wealth and their privileges—or to obtain some more—passed over to the conqueror, accepted his language and religion, and were Magyarised; those who resisted had to emigrate over the mountains to Valachia and Moldavia, as already seen. But the great bulk of the population—the poor, the humble—have neither emigrated nor given up their nationality; they remained, and were persecuted, and greatly suffered, but they stubbornly stuck to creed and tongue. And when suffering became unbearable, they arose, and blood was not spared! A first rising is registered in 1437, in which the victorious Roumanians got back several of their rights. But then came in the close union of the three foreign nations, Hungarians, Secklers, and Saxons, against the perilous awakening of the old masters of the land. The three

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* "Cine-aduce oaste 'n ţară,
Sub blăstămul ţerei pieară!"

agreed to hold fast together, in order to keep down the one. A second rising took place in 1512—a rising more social than political, as, side by side with the Roumanian, there arose the Hungarian peasant also, too much oppressed by his own nobleman; the leader of the rising, Dosza, was himself a Seckler. The result was put down in blood, and the yoke became heavier still. A third rising was to come in connection with affairs in the free principalities, to be related hereafter.

The brightest moment in Roumanian history was in the year 1600, when Michael the Brave—

> "He is Michael the hero
> Who springs on seven horses
> That the Sultan cries: O woe!"*

voyevode of Valachia, after having succeeded in overthrowing the Turkish yoke and raising the country again to the situation it was in at the beginning of Mirtchea's reign, conquered—by events too long to unfold here—Transylvania and the Moldavia, and realised thus for one moment—a few months only—the great fact which up to the present moment has remained a mere dream to Roumanian fancy—the unity of the whole Roumanian nation—north of the Danube, at least. The stroke was as brilliant as it was short. There followed Hungarian intrigues, imperial interests (of the Habsbourg Rudolph II.), and Polish interference, and the Roumanian hero fell, consumed like a bright lightning flash by its own fire. He fell, and with him the Roumanian dream of unity ended. At Michael's approach the Roumanians of Transylvania had arisen, hoping much from one so brave and of their own blood! But, unfortunately, Michael the Brave was not a far-seeing statesman, or rather he made the mistake of believing that he would master Transylvania much more easily with the help of Hungarian nobility than with Roumanian peasantry; but the nobility would not have him and the peasants

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* "El e viteazul Mihai
Ce sare pe șapte cai
De strîgă Sultanul vai!"

he had helped to overcome. His great national accomplishment went to pieces, and brothers once more were severed. If the hero's praises were sung by his own people at home, nothing of it has been collected yet, or hardly anything. The Moldavian peasant, however, could not help pouring out his admiration for the hero who had saved his people from the Turkish yoke:—

"Have you heard of an Oltean,
An Oltean, a Craiovean
Who does not fear the Sultan?"

And so in eight laudatory strophes he sings his praises, ending with the yearning appeal:—

"Oh, oh, oh, Michael, Michael,
Why do you not feel with us, too,
And save us from trouble and woe!"*

Another song concerning Michael the Brave has been traced in Macedonia, but as it is in Greek it may not be of popular origin. The memory of the conquest of Transylvania has been preserved in a song which seems to have been composed in the reign of one of Michael's successors, Radu Sharban Bassarab. In a long ballad, referring to a battle of this prince's, and complaining of the people's sufferings, he is invited to reconquer Transylvania:—

"Woe, oh woe! your greatness,
What a doom is on my country!
The Hungarians torment us,†

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* "Auzit-aţi de-un Oltean,
De-un Oltean, de-un Craiovean
Ce nu-i pasă de Sultan?
. . . . .
Alelei! Mihai, Mihai,
Căci de noi milă nu ai
Să ne scăpi de-amar şi vai!"

† "Oleo-leo, Măria-Ta
Ce potop în ţara mea!
Ungurii ne năcăjesc,

The Turks raid our cattle,
The Tartars plunder us:
Woe on the Roumanian nation!
Green leaf of gilly-flower
Come, O Lord, your grandeur,
I know a hidden dell,
Through the rock's narrow vale,
Where no bird shall see us:
I lead you into my land
Come, O lord, to master it
From the pagans to rid it."*

After the extinction of the two reigning dynasties the "Bassarabi" in Valachia, the "Mushatini" in Moldavia, things went on from bad to worse with the struggles for the thrones. Competition became keener than ever, and auction the regular system of nomination of the voyevodes to the thrones. Any one now could compete for the Roumanian throne, provided he could afford to spend the sums of money required. Besides the tribute, a great and variable price for the throne, and no end of bribes to viziers and other officials of the Porte, no other qualification whatever was of avail, not even the actual possession of the money, for Constantinople was swarming with usurers, mostly Greeks, with ever ready purse for needy borrowers and high percentages. Foreigners, and especially Greeks, began now to buy the Roumanian thrones. These monarchs, well aware that their good time could only be of short duration, as the Turks were not a bit averse from changing them every other year, as a rule, brought with them usurers into the countries, that they might gather their own money from the

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* Turcii vitele răpesc,
Tatarii ne jăfuesc:
Vai de neamul românesc!
Frunză verde micşunea,
Hai, doamne, Măria-ta,
Ştiu ascunsă cărărea
Printre stânci strâmtă vâlcea,
Să nu simtă paserea:
Te tulesc în ţara mea
Hai, doamne, s'o stăpâneşti
De păgâni s'o isbaveşti."

Roumanian taxpayers. The taxation, on the other hand, was regulated by the monarch's own will; the people, always overtaxed, became poorer and poorer, bending their heads lower and lower under the yoke of tyranny. Besides, the monarchs, who wished to save as much money as possible for the impending hard times, tried to keep for themselves all the income raised by taxation, and to pay off their creditors by some other means; these they found in presenting the creditors with lands and offices, and thus the noble class began to be filled with the foreign and Greek element. This, together with the constantly recurring plunders of the countries at the hand of Turkish armies, sent ever to support this or that newly nominated monarch, caused naturally great discontent, which was more than once utilised by the nobles, the *boïars*, to raise revolts against the Greeks, who were sometimes driven out of the country, to come back again with a vengeance! One of these risings brought to the thrones of both principalities Roumanian rulers, Mateï Bassarab, in Valachia, and Vasile Lupu, in Moldavia (1633 and 1634 respectively), who reigned for a period of about twenty years, a wonderful term for those times! Unfortunately their reign was marked by frequent wars with each other, by which the good results of their rule all went to waste. The most important of these results was the suppression of the antiquated Slavonic language in Church and State, and its substitution by the Roumanian language; but of that more by and by. With all that, the Greek element went on growing—to such an extent, indeed, that, soon after the turning out of the Slavonic language from Church and State, and almost before the Roumanian language had put in an appearance, it was itself again put aside and replaced by the Greek language, in Church at least, and, what was worse, in society also, being the language of the Court and of the nobility at large; but the people never adopted it.

With the end of the seventeenth century, Greek influence had set in quite comfortably in both principalities. Having entered through commerce first, through religion

afterwards, through money and politics later on, the Greeks were soon swarming in the countries, in the shape of noblemen and high officials, of creditors of the monarchs, of speculators of all sorts, all sucking like famished leeches the wealth of the countries. Even before the eighteenth century—the century of the Phanariotes—many a prince was a Greek, and surrounded by Greeks. The poor Roumanian peasant knew them only too well: at the time of Mateĭ Bassarb he was already wont to sing—

"The Greek is a filthy otter
He is an envenomed beast," *

and would gladly get rid of the Greek ruler:

"For many a brave with us
Would much rather meet his death
Then be ruled by a Greek prince." †

But he could not get his desire; on the contrary, with the eighteenth century Greek rule became decisively established. The Porte gave the thrones chiefly to Greeks from the Phanar, a suburb of Constantinople, whence the name of Phanariotes. This epoch of Phanariotic rule lasted more than one century. It is, with small exception, a black page in Roumanian history; the Turk was now the absolute master who ruled from afar through these princes, who, although not wearing the title of pashas, were, in fact, hardly anything better. Thus the Roumanians, north of the Danube, were once more bound under an equal fate almost with their remote brothers south of the river, these latter ruled by real pashas. The condition of the people was so miserable from the very beginning that the Phanariotes themselves, in their pressing need of a taxpaying population that had

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* "Grecul e vidră spurcată,
Este fiearĭ nveninată."

† "Că sînt mulți voinici la noi
Ce doresc moartea mai bine
Decît Domn Grec sa le fie."

almost disappeared, found it necessary to make reforms in favour of the peasants, which reforms, however, came to nothing, on account of the ill-will of the ruling classes. This was a period of emigration: beyond the Danube, where many villages of Roumanian settlers are seen to the present day; beyond the Dniester, where many a brave Roumanian could find military employment in Polish and Russian armies, and where many settlers are also found to-day. Those who remained at home had a hard time of it. When patience was at an end, many took to the forests, and under the name of *heydoicks* ("outlaws") took revenge on the nation's oppressors.

In this same eighteenth century Transylvania rang once more with a mighty rising of the Roumanians; the revolution of *Neculai Ursu Horia* drenched Transylvania in blood and fire from end to end. The leader met with a tragic end on "the wheel," but the result was nevertheless the suppression of serfdom in Transylvania.

In the two principalities the social and economic evils of the people were doubled by political misfortunes; this phanariotic epoch saw Moldavia amputated of two of her fairest and most fertile provinces, Bukovina and Bassarabia. Austria, ill satisfied with her first share of Poland, demanded and obtained from the Turks the Bukovina (1775) with Sutcheava, the old capital of Moldavia, and the monastery of Putna, with her rulers' tombs. And, says a legend, one night the great bell of the monastery, the Buga, began to toll by itself, louder and ever louder, until the monks, awakened and in great terror, perceived the church lighted up with a strange, unearthly light. They rushed in, but at the opening of the door the bell stood still, and intense darkness set in; the oil-lamps on the tomb of great Stephen went out, although full of oil, and next day the portrait of the great monarch hanging in the church was found perfectly dark and discoloured. The shade of the great monarch was in mourning over his nation's loss! In less than half a century after, Russia took the Bassarabia (1812), the whole region between Prut and Dniester, the Prut becoming henceforth what the Dniester had been up to now,

the "accursed river," across which all evils used to come. The Roumanian thus cut off finds himself a stranger on the soil where he was born; he cannot forget his ties with the rest of Moldavia; he curses the enemy who has given him over to the Russian; on the other hand, the Moldavian on the right bank of the Prut will deeply deplore the loss of the province, and thus they both sing:—

"Green leaf of dry apple,
May curses fall upon the kin,
And the house be ever deserted,
And the children put in prison,
Of him who made the Russian
Master beyond the Prut."*

And from the other bank a sympathetic voice joins in complaint and curse:—

"Green leaf of twisted blade
May the Russian be accursed,
For ever since he has come
Upon us, and has mastered us,
Our house seems to be no house,
Our table seems to be no table,
The weather is upside down,
And the earth is full of anger!
Green leaf of little withe
The Prut cries itself to death,†

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* "Frunză verde măr uscat
Fi i-ar neamul blastamat
Fi i-ar casa tot pustie
Și copii' în puscărie
Cine pe Rus l'a făcut
Stăpân dincolo de Prut."

† "Foaie verde fir sucit
Fire-ar Rusu-afurisit,
Că de cînd el a venit
Peste noi și ne-a robit
Casa par' că nu ni-i casă
Masa par' că nu ni-i masă
Vremea par' că-i tot pe dos
Și pamîntul mînios!
Foaie verde lozioară
Prutul plînge se omoară

And we all join in a crowd,
For henceforth who of us can say
Whenever he shall be free?"*

The great losses told heavily on the Roumanian heart; his Christian brothers abroad have spoliated him as much as they could; his Christian brothers at home oppress him beyond bearing; the Turk, the supreme ruler, is accounted the original cause of all these evils, he wants to destroy it; and so it is that in all the Russo-Turkish wars, the Russian armies were filled with Roumanian volunteers, who joined in a fight against the common pagan enemy.

In 1821 the Greek revolution against the Turks awakened the Roumanians to a revolution against their own oppressor, the Greek. With Tudor Vladimirescu the Roumanian peasant leaves for a moment "the horns of the plough." He began by taking a bloody revenge on his oppressor at home, the boïar, Greek or Roumanian; he spent his last penny on a rifle, and under Tudor's leadership went to free the country from the phanariotes; he was quite ready for self-sacrifice, and his weeping wife he soothed with the words :—

"Cry no more, my dearest Mary,
Take care of John and of the cottage
And of the poor little girls,
For hard days are upon us.
Do not cry over my death,
For evil fate is on the land.
Look, we are starting to plough,†

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* Şi cu noi toţi grămăgioară
Că de-acu cine mai ştie
Slobod cînd are să fie!"

† "Nu mai plânge Măriuţă
Vezi de Ion şi de căsuţă
Şi de bietele copile
C'am ajuns în rele zile,
Să nu plângeţi moartea mea
Că-i pe ţară piază rea.
Uite mergem să arăm

To cut across the fallow,
And then we are going to sow.
You will then come after us
And harvest a hundredfold.
Do not weep, do not be sorry:
The Lord Tudor is with us,
May God also be with you!"*

And sow they did, their own blood and bones, for the next generations to reap the benefit. The sufferings of the people at the hands of Turks and Greeks, who plundered and set the countries afire from end to end, were beyond description. People of all classes ran away to the mountains and the woods, as they were wont to do of old, at the time of previous invasions. This epoch has remained in people's memory like a dreadful nightmare, and has been called the *bejania;* this was a time when the ox-carts were provided with two poles, one in front, the other behind; if the fugitives in their flight met with danger ahead, there was no time to waste on turning the cart round, especially as the roads were narrow, so they quickly unyoked the oxen and put them at the other end, and back they drove in another direction as fast as they could. The sacrifice of life and wealth was enormous, but the prize was at hand: the sun of 1822 shed its brilliant beams on Roumanian thrones with Roumanian monarchs; Greek rule was done away with, as well as the Greek language vanished at once as by miracle. And what of the Greeks? They all were found to have turned out Roumanians! The fact is, the Greeks had for more than a century contrived to Grecise the Roumanians, but now instead of that *they* were themselves Roumanised.

During these fateful years of 1821–1822, whilst the

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* Ţelina s'o despicăm
Că avem să sămănăm.
Voi aveţi să ne urmaţi
Şi 'nsutit să seceraţi
Nu plângeţi, nu vă 'ntristaţi:
Domnul Tudor e cu noi
Dumnezeu fie cu voi."

Northern Roumanians fought to get rid of the Greek rule, the Valachians of the Pindus took arms, and fought side by side with the Greeks against the Turks; they fought for Greek independence. Many of the captains, even of the greatest ones, like Botzaris, Colocotroni, were nothing but Grecised Roumanians. The Greeks won their liberty, but the Valachians lost more than they won in their situation between both Turks and Greeks.

The year 1848, the next era of revolutions, found a ready help in the Roumanian people, in striking blows for liberty, both in Transylvania and in the principalities. In Transylvania they fought against the Hungarians in bloody fights, where women fought side by side with the men; and advantages were secured when the Hungarians were beaten, but were lost afterwards, through the weakening of Austria in 1866. In the principalities the Roumanians arose to shake off the yoke of the Russian protectorate, even heavier than Turkish suzerainty, which had already been laid on both principalities since 1774. The protectorate was, however, removed only in 1856 by the treaty of Paris, when also a slice only of Bassarabia was restored to Moldavia—to be taken back again in 1878.

In 1859 the Union of Moldavia and Valachia was effected by the unanimous consent of all, well aware that they were absolutely the same people, and that their most natural status was in unity not in a division: the *Milcov* was "drunk out in a breath," the little boundary was swept away for ever, and the brothers united, quite conscious by this time that—

"Where there is one, there is no strength,
In trouble as well as in woe;
Where there are two there grows the strength,
And the foes does not progress." *

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* "Unde-i unul, nu-i putere
La nacaz şi la durere;
Unde-s doi, puterea creşte
Şi duşmanul nu sporeşte."

The Roumanians united by the simple election of the same prince, the Moldavian boïar, Alexander Joan Cuza; all the rest came by itself. Cuza's successor was Charles I. of Hohenzollern, who has, since the last war, won for himself the title of king. In this war the Roumanians, as allies of the Russians, fought bravely against the Turks, and won the independence of the country. But in return the Roumanians were obliged to make a sore sacrifice: the Russian allies deprived them once more of that last part of Bassarabia, restored in 1856, giving in return the rather inferior compensation of Dobrogia—also lost by the Roumanians in the fourteenth century. One more lesson for the Roumanian people to learn, which, indeed, had been long known and expressed in the proverb: "Guard me, O God, against my friends, for against my foes I can guard myself."

V

"Românul nu piere."
("The Roumanian never dies.")

The Roumanians, then, the descendants of Roman colonists and Romanised Dacians, after a comparatively short babyhood rocked under the careful eye of Mother Rome on the Carpathian heights, were thrown away into the stormiest childhood, in which the only problem was not "how to live," but "how not to die." A solution of the problem has been offered by the mountains, both north and south of the Danube. From Carpathian to Pindus it is on the heights that the Roumanian nation has found a shelter for its long and helpless childhood; these heights, these mountains, have moulded into their final shape the Roumanian body and soul. Narrow and unfertile region, the Pindus has reared poorer children, less fit for the struggle of life; large and generous, the Carpathian has been a faithful and devoted cradle, and is to the present day the stronghold of Roumanism. Of the ten or eleven millions of Roumanians living at present

north of the Danube, in a compact mass over the Carpathian region, three millions are still striving on its heights, in the very plateau of Transylvania and on the western slopes, half-way down to the Tissa, in the provinces of Maramuresh, Crishiana, Temishiana, and Banat, and the northern province of Bukovina, under Austro-Hungarian rule, thriving and prospering with all that, for, as can be gathered from the official statistics, this Roumanian population is ever on the increase, with all the violent tendency of the Hungarians to Magyarise everything and everybody around. The Carpathians are the abundant spring of Roumanism; in proportion as it fills, its waves run over the border and flow towards the plains. As you walk along the eastern and southern Carpathians, inside the Free-Roumania boundary, ever and anon you come on double-villages, bearing the same name, but with the prefixes of either *pămînteni* (that is to say, "local"), or of *ungureni* (which means "coming from Hungary") respectively. And, when asking for explanation, you are told that both kind of dwellers are Roumanians, only the former have always been there, whilst the latter have come at a more recent date from "beyond the mountains" and settled down, and that is why they are designated by the distinctive denomination of "ungureni." And all the summer, too, you come across crowds of Carpathian dwellers, be it in Transylvania or Bukovina, swarming about the plains in quest of work. And they get it, too, for Free Roumania is as yet rather thinly populated with her 5,406,000 inhabitants on a surface of 131,020 sq. km.

The Carpathians have sent out shoots of the Roumanian trunk as far west as Moravia and Istria; only here they have experienced a hard time under the Slav blast. The 150,000 Valachians, said to be living in Moravia, have been entirely Slavisised; they have forgotten their mother-tongue, excepting the few Roumanian words they have preserved in their newly-learnt language; they have forgotten their nationality, except the name of the soil they are treading on, called still *Vlashka* (Germ. Wallachei); and their own appellation of *Vlahi*,

but for many customs and usages identical with those of the Roumanians, and which make them a distinct population from those surrounding them, recognised as such by even Slav and German writers, who have paid them some attention. In Istria there is a still larger number of Roumanians settled down, especially on the eastern coast of the peninsula, on the slopes of Monte Maggiore. These also have been Slavicised, leaving still some 5,000 Roumanians, who can speak the language, tainted with the strong peculiarity of *rotacism;* they also call themselves *Rumeri,* whilst the strangers call them *Vlachi.* Even those who speak no longer Roumanian have preserved many of the Roumanian habits and national customs. But Roumanism is dying out fast there, too, under strong pressure of Slav influence; and they are fatally marked for death, being, like the Vlachi of Moravia, so far away from the main trunk, and kept apart by such a wide sea of diverse populations: all the *omnium gatherum* of peoples and races known under the name of the Austrian Empire.

In Transylvania proper the Roumanians are not alone masters, but the other nations are in inferior numbers, whilst the Roumanians make up 60 per cent. of the whole population, the Magyars (Hungarians and Secklers together) make up only 27 per cent., and the Saxons 10 per cent., other minor races making up the remaining 3 per cent. In this respect Bukovina stands at a disadvantage, for, whilst she at the time of the conquest was populated with a large Roumanian population, with an unquestionable and absolute majority, this Roumanian population enjoys to-day but a relative majority; of the 650,297 inhabitants only 35 per cent. are Roumanians, 30 per cent. are Ruthenians (Slavs), all the rest being Germans, Jews, Hungarians, &c. Since 1849 Bukovina forms an autonomous province with a ducal title; before that date it was united to Galicia, and this brought in the powerful Slav element, which puts under danger of Slavicisation the Roumanians and all the rest.

Beyond the Prut, in Bassarabia, the country between the Prut and the Dniester, out of a population of

1,641,559 inhabitants, 66 per cent.—that is 1,089,999, according to Russian statistics—are Roumanians. Of pure Russians there are only 34,437, but there are other Slavs, chiefly Ruthenians, to the number of over 330,000, all the rest being composed of various foreign settlers—Bulgarians, Germans, Armenians, Greeks, Jews, &c. And there are also Roumanians beyond the Dniester, in the province of Kerson, leading their own life in their own villages, and still speaking their mother-tongue; there are also Roumanian colonies as far afield as the Caucasus, still speaking their own language and keeping to the national usages and customs; all these Roumanians offer a stubborn resistance to the pressing current of Russian influence.

It cannot be denied that the Carpathians from top to bottom are Roumanian mountains; from the crown of the highest peaks down to the wide-stretched lap by the side of the Dniester, Danube, Tissa, a solid compact population of over ten millions of Roumanians is striving to hold its own among ever-encroaching neighbours, and smaller populations run between. Of these, the Hungarians are the most numerous by far, being some six and a half millions, but their own abode is in the vast Hungarian Pusta on both banks of the Tissa.

Beyond the Danube, what remains of the Roumanian nation can be called nothing more than splinters strewn about the variegated mosaic of nationalities making up the map of the Balkan peninsula. First of all, there are the Roumanian colonists settled down on the right bank of the Danube; in Bulgaria some 47,000, half of which are settled together in thirty-six villages by the mouths of the Timok, the rest scattered about in four groups along the Danube; in Servia a much larger number of Roumanian settlers have been counted, over 150,000, of whom, however, a small percentage only are settled; the others lead a nomadic pastoral life in the mountains. All these Roumanians of both Bulgaria and Servia are settlers of comparatively recent date, not older than the eighteenth century; they belong to the northern section

of the Roumanian nation, and speak the very same Roumanian dialect.

Besides, there is a much larger number of Roumanians, spread lower down, in the Pindic region, those cut off from the common body in the third century at the time of the Emperor Aurelianus; these call themselves *Aromâni* or *Armâni*, and are called by their foreign neighbours *Zinzari* and *Cutzovlachi*, and various other local appellations. These *Armăni*, or Pindic *Vlachi*, speak a Roumanian dialect at great variance with the North Roumanian. Of these Pindic Valachs, a smaller number, comparatively, are attached to the land, and are consequently easier to get at; but by far the greatest number are nomads, roaming about like foam on the billows of foreign nations, and consequently are difficult to number. It is impossible to give at present an exact return of the Roumanians of the Pindus; some admit the number of 500,000, others a smaller number; others, again, go so far as to admit 1,000,000 of Valachians in the Pindus, and others even more. The exact truth seems to be beyond reach as yet. At all events, it is certain that they were once much more numerous, but that they have been Grecised all through the centuries with great assiduity and often with violence, Church and school being active agents. The identity of creed has brought about the Grecisation of the adults; as for the children, the Greeks have founded more schools for the education of the Armâni than they have for their own children at home. In the last twenty years Roumanian schools have been founded, but their progress has been gravely checked by Greek interference, often violent. On the other hand, there is a Slav influence as well, working on the Roumanian development, very violent just now, when its representatives, the Bulgarians, have taken to their knives to support their national ardour. Between these two pressing influences, what can Roumanism do? If those mountains presented wider pastures for their flocks; if a unity of a fair, impartial Government secured them a fair chance of doing their best, we may well assume that the Armâni would still live and multiply and prosper. But cut into

pieces as the peninsula is now, the Armîn shepherd sees with despair the frontiers growing under his feet, and the taxes multiplying in front of his herds, and it no longer pays to rear sheep with all the taxes he has to pay in order to get them from one pasture to another; and thus he sees himself obliged to give up pastoral life which he loves, to settle down in the plain and till the land which is not his, and which he does not like. The Armân, therefore, rather keeps still to nomadic life, as an ambulant trader or worker, wandering all over the country place for a scanty living, but, when he can, returning back to his family left at home in the mountain villages. If only they were crowded all together, these much-tried offsprings of old Rome! But they are scattered about in Macedonia, Albania, Epirus, Thessaly, Acarnany, and Etholy, divided under Turkish and Greek dominion. In Macedonia the Armâni are more united in the western mountains region; a compact mass also is to be met with in middle Albania, but most of the Armâni are found in the region between Epirus and Thessaly, on the highest summits of the Pindus and on the southern slopes halfway down the river Aspropotamos; at the feet of the Olympus and Ossa there are also Armîn villages, and sporadically they are scattered all over Beotia, with a rather more compact group in Acarnania and Etholy, not far from the famous Missolonghi. And all around them, these Armîni come into contact with Greek and Slav propaganda. And a great many have become Greeks already; the greatest part of the population of Epirus and Thessaly are hardly anything else than Grecised Armîni. The well-to-do classes, almost entirely Grecised, are the most ardent supporters of Greek propaganda, spending their money on Greek institutions of culture, &c., wrapping themselves in the pride of borrowed ancestors, and forgetting all the time that they too have ancestors of whom they may be proud.

If Roumanism in the Carpathian has been saved in the darkest hours of hardship, it has been saved by the poor, by the humble; will the poor and the humble of the Pindus be able to do as much for Roumanism in their

much harder conditions? With ill-will and cowardly desertion they can certainly not be charged; some of them have carried Roumanian usages and Roumanian habits and shreds of Roumanian language as far as Asia Minor; in Bythinia there are villages of emigrated Armîni, still aware of their origin, but dead to the nation.

From this rapid sketch of the history of the Roumanian nation, it seems obvious that it has always been a viable one, is still in full vitality, and has now arrived in full force of manhood. The Roumanian nation has struggled to live, and is still struggling with staunch stubbornness; in that long, protracted struggle she has acquired a force of resistance, a toughness that has made her almost proof against new blows. Through the centuries the Roumanians have fought for life and liberty, for the preservation of their nationality and faith; they have always been on the defensive, protecting themselves, but never attacking others or taking what was not their own; never have they fought to acquire by violence, domination, or command over other nations; the Roumanian has always been found freeminded, liberal, tolerant in the full meaning of the word; he will never attack, never become a prey to greedy desires, but will strike hard before giving up his own, and will ever lend a docile ear to that fateful warning resounding from the Carpathian far down into the plain:—

"Arise, arise, Roumanian,
From thy deathlike sleep,
In which thou hast been plunged
By the barbarous tyrants!*

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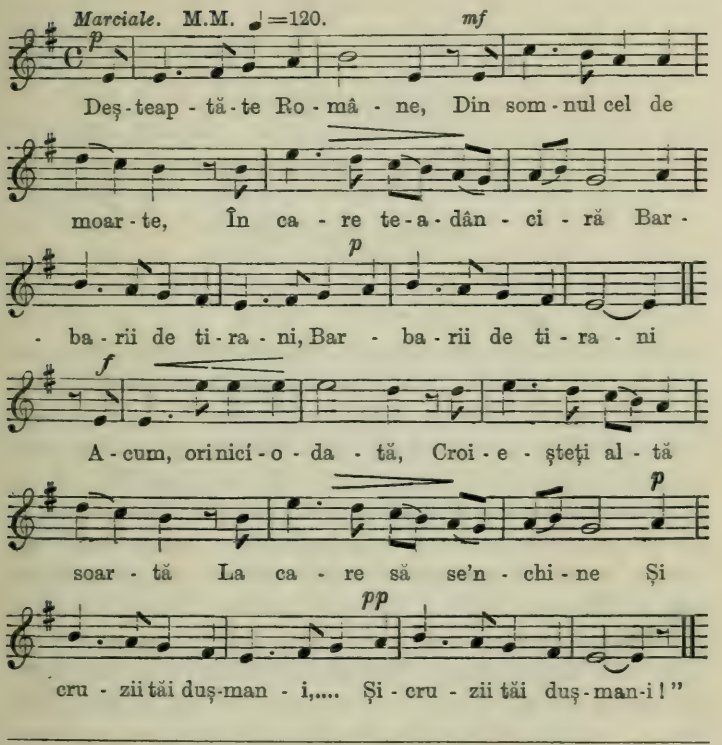
* "Deşteaptă-te Române,
Din somnul cel de moarte,
În care te-adâncirâ
Barbarii de tirani!

Now, oh now, or never,
Shape thee another fate
To which thy cruel enemies
May also bow their heads." * . . .



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* "Acum, ori nici-o-dată,
Croieşte-ţi altă soartă
La care să se' nchine
Şi cruzii tăi duşmani." . . .

CHAPTER I

PEASANT AND SOIL

LANDED PROPERTY

I

As those who have read the preceding brief historical sketch will gather, the great barbaric invasions, protracted over ten long centuries, have thrown a thick veil over the formation of the Roumanian nation, and at the same time have checked the growth of its natural development, keeping it still in infancy up to the thirteenth century. During the short intervals which followed the great storms of the invasions, we had a glimpse of the Roumanians as they dwelt *in* the Carpathians, leaning *on* the Carpathians, girding them all along, from Western Valachia to Northern Moldavia, with the Slavs, lower down, filling the plains. In those times of much land and few people—at least few labouring people—and of no centralised government, people very likely took possession of the ground in proportion as they tilled it, according to the Slav formula. "Where my plough, and my hoe, and my scythe have passed, that land is mine;" and it is no wonder that the Roumanians, who finally mixed with the Slavs in the plain, entirely Roumanised them as they had already done the Slavs who had ventured up the mountains. If the Roumanian introduced the Slav into the secrets of ewes and lambs, of cheese and butter making, it is no less true that they also borrowed from them many a new and useful imple-

ment, or, at least, new Slav names for old things. As under these circumstances property is to develop in the whole region of the outer Carpathian slopes, down to the Danube and the Dniester, it is no wonder that Roumanian property should have been moulded, partly at least, on Slav models.

Strictly speaking, property in Dacia must have existed ever since the colonisation, but the turmoil of the invasions turned all things upside down, and it is not hard to understand that the Roumanians in their continual flights up and down hill, should have lost their "papers" had they had such. But human memory was stronger in those paperless times, and witnesses in flesh and blood did as much for recognition of property as papers could have done. In a Latin document of the Hungarian administration of Transylvania, dating from the year 1231, one finds that a certain German from the lowlands, Vydh de Bord, bought an estate from a Roumanian, *Bujul filio Stoje*, in the Valachian district (*Terra Blacorum*), but the purchaser declared before the Chapter of the Church, that he would give back that land to its old owner, another Roumanian, *Trulh filio Choru*, from whom he had got the money given for it, and he would do this because Trulh had proved "with many witnesses" that this land had belonged from time immemorial to his "fathers and forefathers." Now this is one fact, and there are others which may still be brought to light from dusty documents, to the effect that landed property was a known fact with Roumanian people, "from times beyond recollection."

They possessed land, and, above all, they possessed undoubtedly the mountains and the *poïanas* on the heights, which they enlarged at will by burning the too cumbersome forests. Little they thought during their harassed wanderings from glade to glade that new guests would come in later, to deny not only their private, but even their national, property in those regions, trodden by them in all directions.

When the Hungarian invasion came, Transylvania was conquered, both the land and its owners. Among these

owners there must have been a number of great ones, of "nobles," as they are mentioned in repeated documents, emanating from Hungarian kings in the succeeding centuries, as having their privileges repeatedly sanctioned for "loyalty" and various services, especially fighting against the Turks. Loyalty is a fine word, but oh, how elastic its application! Loyal they were, these nobles, to the strange king, but were they loyal to their own blood, to their nation, to their humbler brethren? It is well known that a great part of the Transylvanian nobility passed to the conqueror, adopting his language and creed, in order not to lose their land and privileges. Those who declined to do that—to "bend their heads" under the foreign yoke—were simply dispossessed, despoiled eventually of their land, reduced to utter poverty and even to servitude; and the eighteenth century finds the Roumanian people in Transylvania without land, without rights, and without liberty. They were serfs, bondsmen on the land of the nobles, and even the priests were treated as such. We have seen in the preceding chapter that the Roumanians of Transylvania rose several times against their oppressors: spoliation of their lands was always one of the chief causes for this. After bloody suppression of risings punishment came: new spoliations, new sufferings; a kind of vicious circle, spoliation engendering rebellion, rebellion bringing about spoliation. Suppression of serfdom was itself only the outcome of the bloody rising of 1785. But the Roumanians were not serfs alone, the Hungarian peasant shared the same fate. So much for the Carpathian plateau.

As to the outer slopes of the Carpathians, we know that they were taken possession of by the Roumanians descending from the heights, long before the foundation of the two principalities of Valachia and Moldavia, and this often by the burning of forests and by the cutting down and uprooting of trees and roots. In what manner this taking possession was settled at the time, it would be hard to say exactly; one thing, however, seems certain, namely, that in the oldest times, property was

inherited *undivided*, the heirs dividing only the income from it. Later, these undivided properties began to be divided into "bodies," worked still in common by groups of individuals descending from the same ancestor. To the present day, an estate recognised as having been the original property of a family, before the division was made, is still called a *bătrân*—from *veteranus*. We know that the Roman *veterani* (soldiers whose service was ended) were given land in the regions they had been guarding; what if property on these slopes of the Carpathians had its origin rooted in the Roman colonisation? However that may be, these primitive landowners, whether individual or collective proprietors, small or large ones, being bound by similar interests, have naturally united, little by little, and either submitted to one or another chief or voyevode, like Lithuon and Seneslau and others mentioned in history; or else came to some kind of republican organisation of their own, such, for instance, as the simple organisations of the Roumanian Vrancea and Cîmpulung or the Slav republic of Berlad seem to have been, forming thus first rudiments of State life. When the founders of the principalities came from beyond the mountains they found these rudiments of states, and mastered them. History is not quite clear on this point, but very likely the foundation of unity was not completed without a struggle. With respect to Moldavia, history actually tells us how Bogdan had to fight against Balk, son of Sas the Moldavian, son himself of the legendary Dragosh. If fights there were, it is pretty certain that the fate of those beaten was not the same as the fate of the victors, nor even indeed the same as the fate of those who willingly accepted the new rule. The landowners, large and small, who willingly recognised the new ruler, of the same blood and creed as themselves, were left free possessors of their lands and rights, on condition that they paid certain taxes and gave military service. Those subjected by force were obliged to provide a number of days of various services for the prince, as well as to

pay taxes and to fulfil military service, differing thus little on the whole from the free landowners. Besides, the founders of the principalities took at the same time possession, nominally at least, of the waste land, belonging to nobody in particular, and of which there seem to have been very large regions, together with endless woods.

Thus the property respected by the prince at the moment of the foundation was made up of large land holdings—the property of nobility—and the holdings of small landowners, the *răzăshi*, as they are called in Moldavia, or *moshneni*, as they are called in Valachia. Of these *răzăshi* and *moshneni* (yeomen) there exists a certain number to the present day, being the landowners who can show the oldest documents of landed property in all Roumania. They seem to have been very numerous; besides, later division of property brought in the long run most of the great landowners to the rank of mere *răzăshi*. A third kind of property existed also, namely, the common property, by which a whole village owned in common a whole estate; that this common property must have had deep roots is proved by an enactment which, even later, never allowed the selling off of a property to a stranger without the consent of *all* the members of the family or neighbours. On the other hand, the prince came with a troop of followers, who helped him to become lord of the country; these he had to reward for the service done, and the reward always consisted of land. Some of them were presented with stretches of the waste land of which the prince had just taken possession, but what is land without implements to till it? The new proprietors had to coax inhabitants to these empty estates, and this they did by just giving them some land under certain conditions. Others of the monarch's followers were presented by him with some of his subjected villages, that is to say, with the claims he had himself on the inhabitants of those villages, as already alluded to.

As villages had their landed property, so had the towns,

which, by the way, cannot have been for some time (most of them at least) much more than villages. Down to the present day there are towns with land of their own, the *moşia târgului* (the town estate), possessed once by the bulk of the town's population in common, and passed later on into the hands of the communal authorities.

Roughly speaking, this was the state of the rural property between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century. No doubt it has not remained crystallised in that way all through the three centuries; property has certainly shifted a good deal from hand to hand, but on the whole the framework has been the same all along. In this period of time there have been many wars: small and large landowners must have been doing their duty, and consequently must have won new rewards, new stretches of land from the immense property of the monarch. Others, again, may not have done their duty, not provided the due number of soldiers, or not paid the required taxation: punishment must have befallen them; namely, their land must have been taken by the prince to increase his own domain, or else to be presented to others, to warriors or to monasteries, when the monarch was of a particularly religious turn of mind. In this way large properties may have gone on increasing; but, on the other hand, small properties held their own too, by the successive division of large properties among the several inheritors.

Of those remote, quasi-patriarchal times, the Roumanian peasant has preserved the remembrance in more than one ballad, faithful mirrors bringing back to us the life of those times with its lights and shade. As already shown, in those old golden times there seems to have been land for all, more indeed than was wanted, vast regions belonging to nobody, beside immense expanses of woods belonging to all at large and to nobody in particular. Those lands and those woods belonged nominally to the voyevode, but practically, and probably from an older date than his, they belonged to any vagrant adventurer who dared to take

them. The popular ballads bring before our eyes the picture of those times, when the bold adventurers won fields and forests, and in their attitude as transient masters, stood up to fight any transgressor of their boundaries and plundered him. Handsome and brave as a rule, our adventurer was oftentimes more conceited and vain than really strong—*Păunaşul Codrilor* ("little peacock of the woods") he was called—so that often enough he was overcome and driven away by the coarser rival.

In those policeless, fearless days, lived *Stoïan-Popa* (Stoïan the ex-priest), a renowned robber. He drives along in his ox-cart with his handsome wife *Vidra*; they are on a visiting journey to the wife's parents. Slowly, carelessly, they drive on, over woods, over mountains, over villages, without any one disturbing them in the least. But Stoïan is weary of the long journey, he wants a song from his wife. She would much rather not sing, for she knows the power of her voice, which would arouse woods and mountains, and valleys and waters, and surely bring on them the *Păunaşul Codrilor*. Oh! but strong Stoïan does not mind him, he is ready to fight and overcome him; he insists on the song and gets it. The *Păunaşul Codrilor* appears, and requests Stoïan to pay a pass fee, namely, his oxen, his cart, his hatchet, or his fair wife. Stoïan declines—

> "For the soil is not thine;
> Neither thine, nor is it mine,
> But it all belongs to God."*

They fight, the *Păunaş* is overcome, and Stoïan goes off. In other versions, the outcome of the fight is the reverse of this, and people's sympathies are divided between the equally brilliant adventurer and the bandit, but indifferent, after all, to both; or rather,

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* "Căci pământul nu-i al tău;
Nici al tău nu-i, nici al meu,
Ci-i tot a lui Dumnezeu."

they are sure to hold with the bravest in the fight. The *trânta dreapta* (the fair fight), where the bravest overcomes the weakest, is a fight dear to the Roumanian heart, even at the present day.

With much more delight does the popular poet indulge in circumstantial pictures of the deeds of the national hero overcoming the foreign bandit, the national enemy. *Mihu Copilul* is a young hero of this type, and a great favourite with the people, who have sung his praises in numberless ballads all over the regions occupied by Roumanians. This is the tale:—

Mihu Copilul, Păunaş de frunte, copilaş de munte ("best of peacocks, child of the mountain") rides away, "caressing" the woods with the tunes of his *cobuz* (a sort of flute). He rides at midnight, through dark, thick woods on a stony path, lighted only now and then by the sparks brought forth from the stones by the hoof of his "bay." They go along through the sleepy forest; the horse seems weary, the master tenderly asks him the reason, the horse warns him against unseen danger, against the approaching foe, hidden in the thicket:—

"Janosh, the Hungarian
The hardened robber."*

who is near at hand with his "fifty-but-five" followers. But the master encourages the faithful horse; he is strong and knows also that—

"The Hungarian is a braggart,
He is not dangerous;
His mouth is large
But does not bite hard."†

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* "Januş, Ungurean
Vechiul hoţoman."

† "Unguru-i fălos
Nu-i primejdios.
Gura lui e mare
Dar nu muşcă tare."

On the other hand, the Hungarian thief Janosh sits down banqueting with his attendants; of a sudden he warns them with a start that he has heard—

"A sound of a whistle
Sounding through the leaves
Caressing the woods."*

and sends them in search of the stranger with the boastful injunction—

"If he is some brave
With blooming cheeks,
Do not injure him
But bring him fast bound.
If he is some fool
Spoiled by the women,
Give him a cuff
And let him go."†

But our hero makes them take to their heels, and following them to their chief, makes them all meek as lambs with a tune on his cobuz:—

"A wailing tune
So beautiful
That mountains resound,
And falcons gather,‡

---

* "Un glas de cobuz
Printre frunzi sunând
Codrii desmierdând."

† "De-a fi vre-un viteaz
Cu flori pe obraz
Să nu mi-l stricați
Ci să mi-l legați.
Ear vre-un fermecat
De femei stricat
O palma să-i dați
Drumul să-i lasați."

‡ "Un cintec duios
Atît de frumos
Munții că rasuna
Șoimii se adună

The woods awaken,
The leaves whisper,
The stars twinkle
And stop in their course." *

Janosh invites Mihu to partake of his meal, after which single combat is to decide between them. The result is Janosh's death. The followers of the Hungarian chief now beg the victorious Mihu to take them into his service; he promises to do so, if they are able to lift his weapons from the ground, but these proving too heavy for them, he dismisses them with scorn—

"You cowards!
Beast-like men!
Leave the woods
And take to the yoke,
For you, you are not,
You are not like us
Men of true pride
Fit for bravery,
But men of the rabble
Fit for the broad hoe!" †

With this last stroke the poet has drawn the line between the daring adventurer and the common herd of the men whose lot it is to till the ground.

Even more is admired the well-to-do landowner of those times, who, weary of husbandry, and moved by the

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* Codrii se trezesc
Frunzele şoptesc
Stelele clipesc
Şi 'n cale s' opresc."

† "Voi mişeilor!
Haraminilor!
Codrii mi-i lasaţi
Giugul apucaţi,
Că nu sînteţi voi
Nu sînteţi ca noi
Oameni de mândrie
Buni de vitejie
Ci oameni de gloată
Buni de sapa lată!"

spirit of adventure, and the desire of revenge for the ever-recurring plunders of his country, starts against the Tartars (settled down for centuries in South Russia and the Crimea) and, deserting home and plough, rushes across the Dniester for bloody revenge; *Román Grue Grozovan* is the favourite hero of this type.

"High up the Dniester, under Heaven's skirts" there is a Tartar camp; in the middle, a carpeted tent, tall and gorgeous, in which the old Khan sits, surrounded by his guard of Tartars, with "bolting eyes," all on their knees. At the door, a "poor, bound Roumanian," the "Roumanian Grue Grozovan" is being tortured by two Tartars, but does not seem to mind it in the least. Women come wailing to complain about wrongs done to them by Grue, at which the incensed Khan draws his dagger, and threatens the captive hero; but he only answers coolly—

> "Eheu! Lord! You old Khan
> Leave that dagger in your belt,
> For I am son of a Roumanian,
> And have no fear of a pagan."*

Whilst being tortured he revolves in his head a bold plan "to cheat them yet"; he willingly acknowledges all the misdoings imputed to him, but asks for time for repentance, and for a Christian death—"a Roumanian death," says he.

Accordingly he is sent under strong escort to a neighbouring monastery upon the hill to make his amends. Once there, he asks for the release of his right arm that he may cross himself; he crosses himself indeed twice, and upon the third move catches an axe and rushes on the Tartars, who take to flight—then away he runs to the Khan's stables, springs on his best black courser, and showing himself before the Khan's own tent, is off and away! The Tartars rush after him, but—

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* "Alei! Doamne! chan bătrân
Lasă cel hamger la sân
Că eu sînt pui de Român
Şi nu-mi pasă de păgân."

"Woe to you, O pagan Tartars,
Your 'to-morrow' is gone by!
Look, Grue is coming back,
And throws himself among you,
Like a blasting whirlwind
In a field of dried corn;
And with foolish little black
He takes you all one by one,
In a dash he mows you down,
And cuts you down like sheaves
And deprives you of your wealth.
And spares you all future illness
And leaves you behind him
Like mole-hills in a field!"*

And the victorious Grue goes back to his home, to his old pursuits, and does many new feats among his fellow-countrymen:—

"Like a warming sun,
Warming and fertilising;
For much good he does on earth
To bring peace into his soul."†

Those old times of heroism are not without their witness to female bravery also. Shalga, the clever widow, has her sheepfolds set high up the Danube. One night

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* "Alelei, Tartari păgâni
Vi s'a stâns ziua de mâni!
Iată Grue dă 'napoi
Și s'aruncă printre voi
Ca un vânt înviforat
Intr 'un lan de grâu uscat.
Și cu negrușor nebunul
Vă iea unul câte unul
Și din fugă vă cosește
Și vă taie chip snopește
Și de averi vă curățește
Și de boală vă scutește
Și vă lasă 'n urma lui
Ca momii de-a câmpului."

† "Ca un soare ce 'ncălzește
Incălzește si rodește
Că mult bine 'n lume face
Sufletul să și-l împace."

she wakes at her home at the sound of her *baciu's* (head of shepherds) *bucium* ("cane pipe," from *buccina*). She springs on her horse with her *buzdugan* ("club") in her hand, she gallops after the robbers, whose chief even has taken to flight now:—

"He flew on, and on, and on,
Did not even turn his head,
Shalga is here, Shalga is there,
In flight she cuts off his head!
The head remained behind
The body fleeing still on
The blood ran down in streams,
The road turning red!" *

From this it appears clear that in those remote times, beside the admired person of the fair knightly adventurer, beside the noble figure of the national bravo, always victorious and always fighting for a right cause, there existed also robbers of the common type, for whom, however, the people had nothing but contempt and scorn. They were only—

"The eaters of the sheep,
The fear of the merchants,
The whip of the poor." †

II

Adventure and adventurers disappear little by little in proportion as the large domain of the voyevode goes on

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* "Se ducea, ducea, ducea,
Nici capul nu-şi întorcea
Şalga-i ici, Şalga-i colea
Capul din fugă-i tăia!
Capu 'n urmă rămânea
Trupu 'nainte fugea
Sângele pârău curgea
Drumul roş că se făcea!"

† "Mâncătorii oilor
Frica negustorilor
Şi biciul saracilor."

diminishing, portions of it being over and over again given as reward for service in war. The recipient had every reason to desire a profit from the land received, so he did his best to attract settlers; but to that end peace and safety had to be secured in those lands. Many an adventurer probably settled down quietly, handing over to his children and grandchildren the reminiscences of his youth's adventures, which, magnified by youthful fancy, became the ballads of which we have seen some fragments.

The voyevode was wont to give land to his warriors; oftener, probably, to those nearer to him, to those higher on the social ladder; but oftentimes also brave but poorer people were distinguished in the crowd, and their reward was land also. Small as well as large landowners were equally obliged to give military service, and at their own expense; but wars were frequent and expenses heavy, so that many a small landowner was in the long run obliged to sell his land in order to pay the debts contracted through his military duties. Thus the giving of land to him was, after all, nothing more than a fair return for the loss incurred. The popular mind has kept a record of such facts in a fine Moldavian ballad of the fifteenth century, which belongs to the heroic times of Stephen the Great.

On a Saint's day—a fine day, in which "the sun was wrapping the world in gold"—Prince Stephen, "like another sun," rose to go to church. Riding with his suite, with cheering crowds all along the road, he hears the sound of a distant voice, a voice of a man in trouble, shouting as hard as he can:—

"Ha, ho, on Bourean
Draw the furrow on the ridge!" *

And the good monarch says to his followers—

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* "Hai, ho, ța, Bourean
Trage brazda pe tapșan!"

"Have you heard, O have you heard,
A voice of Roumanian in woe?
Go and find him in a twinkling
And be back with him at once!"*

The order is executed, the peasant is taken from his plough on the hill and brought before the monarch, who kindly talks to him thus :—

"Well, my man, be not afraid,
And tell me what is your name?
—Afraid I am not, being a Roumanian,
Afraid I am not, you being my lord!
You are Stephen, the great prince,
Who has no peer in the world,
And I am Shoïman Burtchel,
The son of a dear little brave!" †

Then the voyevode goes on to ask how it is that he is working on a Saint's day. The peasant relates how he has been once a soldier, and has killed many a foe—Tartar, Lithuanian, Hungarian—with his trusty weapon, "an unpeeled club set with nails"; but one day his club, his *ghioaga*, fell, cut down by a hostile sword, and along with it his own right hand fell by the side of the pagan. Ever since he was left a poor man, having "neither house, nor plough, nor bullock to yoke." All the summer he has begged the rich for the loan of a plough, but in vain; then he went to the Tartars, seized a big plough, put one single ox to it, and went to plough on that mound.

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* "Auzit-aţi auzit
Glas de Român năcăjit?
Intr 'o clipă să-l găsiţi
Şi cu el aici să fiţi!"

† "Măi Române să n'ai teamă
Spune-mi mie cum te chiamă?
—Teamă n' am că sânt Român
Teamă n' am că-mi eşti stăpân!
Tu eşti Ştefan domn cel mare
Care'n lume samăn n' are
Şi eu sânt Soiman Burcel
Puişor de voinicel!"

"For the poor has neither sun
Nor any holy day,
But all working days only!"*

At last speaks the voyevode:—

"Now, Burchele, my dear man,
Listen to what I am deciding:
Take a plough with six bullocks
And go rich away from us;
Take that mound as *răzăshie*
To have it for tillage ground.
But on the top of it you'll settle,
Like a sentry you will watch
And if ever you see
Tartars entering my country,
Cry as hard you ever can:
'Spring, O Stephen, to the border
Sword has entered the land!'
Then it is I shall hear you,
Like a dragon will I leap forth,
And no trace shall be left behind
Of Tartars in my land!"†

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* "Că saracul n' are soare
Nici zile de sărbătoare
Ci tot zile lucrătoare!"

† "Măi Burcele fătul meu
Iată ce hotărăsc eu
Iea-ți un plug cu șase boi
Să mergi bogat de la noi;
Iea-ți movila răzășie
Ca s'o ai de plugărie
Dar în vîrfu-i să te-așezi
Ca străjer să privighezi
Și Tatarii de-i vedea
C' au intrat în țara mea,
Tu să strîgi cît îi putea:
'Sai, Ștefane, la hotare
C'a intrat sabia'n țară!'
Atunci eu te-oiŭ auzi
Ca un zmeu m'oiŭ repezi
Si nici urmă a rămânea
'De Tatari în țara mea!"

The "mound of Burtchel" is in the neighbourhood of the town of Vaslui; the legend of Burtchel is not forgotten, and tradition tells us that in Stephen's time a sentry was posted on that mound whose voice was supposed to be so strong that it could be heard in the prince's capital, Succava.

Things went on in this way as long as the domain of the voyevode—renewed from time to time by confiscations of various provinces—lasted. Lost property, renewed property, went on changing from hand to hand. But it was natural that a time should come when the domains of the prince would cease to be his; and it came. In the meanwhile the wars went on, and the small landowners—soldiers at their own expense—one after the other lost their properties, which were pawned and then sold for a trifle to the great landowner. The number of large landowners went on increasing. These also used to receive land from the prince, for their services in war or otherwise, but when the prince had no more land to give, rivalry and intrigue became rampant among the boïars, in the effort to see who would be able to rise higher in the voyevode's favour, and have his fellow boïar despoiled and disgraced, and succeed to the spoils.

On the other hand, the principalities became tributaries to the Turks, and the tribute increased with amazing rapidity, and with it the taxation on the people, taxation still weighing proportionately—in principle at least—on all, according to wealth. But that is not all. The Turks acquired the habit, transformed gradually into a right, of nominating the voyevodes of the principalities, and this nomination is made for money; quite apart from the regular tribute the thrones were *bought*, and the price of a throne became larger and larger with almost every new prince, and yet the competition for the Roumanian thrones grew faster and faster. The candidates for the thrones hardly ever had money of their own to buy them, but Constantinople was swarming with usurers of all kinds, mostly Greeks, with ever ready money to lend the candidates at excessive interest. The successful candidate, once in possession of the throne, had nothing more

pressing to think of than the collecting of money, for the tribute, for paying off the borrowed money, for his own wants, and in provision for the dark future and a probable need of a new struggle for the throne. All the weight of these expenses could not but fall upon the people. The poor got poorer and poorer, till they fell into the most abject serfdom. At first their various labour duties towards the big landowner were increased; next, they resigned their own lands into his hands, on condition, however, that they could live on them and have a right to till them; one step further and they were prevented from ever leaving the land which was theirs no more, but must abide there, at the good will of the landowner, and work for him as much as he wished. The still free *răzăshi*, or small landowners, went quickly down the same way, being for the slightest reason treated by the voyevode as he treated the subjected villages, and given away to boïars, the more so that the boïars, besides intriguing at Court, soon began to intrigue at Constantinople too, in many ways influencing the nomination of the new voyevode, or the overthrow of the existing one. The voyevode quite naturally heaped favours on the heads of his adherents, persecuting his opponents as much as he could, but the happy boïars could hardly get land always from the prince, as there was less and less to be got; instead of that, the functions of the Court and State, not much appreciated till then, came into fashion; the favourite boïars received henceforth their rewards in offices, and titles appended to them, which functions and honours entitled the bearer to a series of rights and revenues from the country. Privileges thus set in, formally, officially.

But something worse was to come yet. The money-lenders in Constantinople, seeing that the voyevodes were changed so often—and this change became more frequent in proportion as the Turks felt greater need of money—that they seldom had time to get enough money from the principalities to pay their loans, would lend no more, except to candidates who undertook to pay the loans of their predecessors as well as their own. In this

way the sums due to usurers in Constantinople became so large that the princes could no longer pay them. But the crafty usurers discovered new means of getting their money back and even with greater profit; they came into the Roumanian countries in the rear of the voyevodes. Thus the principalities were filled with Greeks and with Turks, carrying on trade at their own will and pleasure, and at their own prices, and all under the high shield of the Sultan, for no Roumanian produce could be sold except at Constantinople, and at prices, ridiculously low, fixed there. Most of the Greeks became tax-gatherers, also in the interests of the voyevodes and their own.

And so it came about that with the seventeenth century a great change set in. We find the greatest part of the population fallen low under the yoke of serfdom; we find that many of the great landowners of old have sunk to the rank of small landowners, or *răzăshi* —mostly through division of property—and not seldom also into serfdom itself. Serfs began to be treated more severely than ever; they could no longer stand it: eventually by the end of the seventeenth century emigration was in full swing. Higher up we find the nobility with their titles, their lands, and their serfs, but few of them are Roumanians. Among the Greek usurers many have crept into places of honour beside the monarch, and, instead of being paid their loan in money, were paid in functions and titles, in lands also, oftener by marriage with the boïars' daughters, just as the monarchs willed. From the seventeenth century onward the national nobility began to be invaded by foreign elements —Greek adventurers, sly, creeping hand-lickers of a parvenu-prince, a mere puppet himself in the hands of the Turks. But with all that, there was none the less an all-powerful, absolute monarch on his throne, and no one would have been able to stand his wrath. All honest and really *noble* Roumanian nobles had to retire to the background, and efface themselves, if they wanted to live. There were risings, but they led to nothing so far as the people and their conditions in life were concerned; they were at the lowest depth of their misery.

Serfdom has overshadowed with its dark wings all the Carpathians.

Some bright intervals in this gloomy prospect broke now and then its all too sad monotony: there are instances of honourable rich landowners, who, feeling the injustice of serfdom, gave back to their serfs their soil and liberty. Of these generous deeds there is documentary evidence in the seventeenth century, two notable examples being due to women. The first was by a certain lady Bolosina, widow of the boïar *pitar* (the Baker) Dima, who on her deathbed presented her serfs with their lands and freedom, on condition that they would remember her in their prayers. The second was by Ileana Cantacuzino, widow of an eminent statesman, who presented land and freedom to some of her serfs, on condition that if they were ever to sell their liberty again, then her heirs should have the right to take back the lands without payment. As it appears, freedom was not easily preserved.

These were times of hardship and suffering—no longer times of romantic adventure and heroism. A chasm had opened between rich and poor, ever widening, through the ferocious greed of the former and the ever-increasing poverty of the latter. The upper classes learned the lesson in the school of the oppressor, that wealth and rank can be won by other means than bravery: crawling and intriguing near the voyevode were equally effective; they continued to behave the more rapaciously and cruelly towards their inferiors. Hatred thus sprang up between the two classes. This hatred is embodied in the figure of the famous *haïdook* ("outlaw"), national robber, killing and plundering the foreign oppressor, the greedy boïar, the Greek "leech," stealing the treasure of the prince whenever he can: who avenge the sufferings of their fellow-peasants, always sharing their booty with the needy. The haïdook's life was a hard one; tracked like a mad wolf from wood to wood, his life lay at his rifle's end; often alone or with a small band, there was no rest for him. But the peasant loved him, helped him on, and sang his praises. The haïdook is no more the

noble adventurer of past ages who slaughtered too, but only in honourable fight; the haïdook killed like a thief, from behind an ambush, or however he could; his idea was that fair means were only to be used with honourable foes; not for the cowardly Greek "leech" that sucked the blood of the people. His ideal was only an ideal of revenge for his fellow creatures; it was the last shadow of the spirit of freedom of past ages.

Codreanu was a haïdook, roaming in the neighbourhood of Jassy, in the great old forest of Bordea. The ghastly caverns dug up above the highway—hiding-places of the robbers—together with the picturesquely situated inn of Shanta, could tell many a tale of him. A legend introduces to us the haïdook in shepherd's disguise looking round for a good horse. He meets a *Mocan*, or nomad shepherd from the mountains, carrying salt, mounted on a good horse. He proposes to buy the horse from him, but the mocan declines to sell, whereupon he simply takes the horse, and instead of paying—

> "Rather cross yourself, mocan,
> Say you make a present to Codrean.
> . . . . .
> And on he went, he went, he went,
> Until the sun had set." *

Not very chivalrous, but convenient; the times of chivalry are gone by. Besides, the mocan was not a poor man, he could bear the loss. Codreanu rode up to the fold on the hill; the shepherds ran away in fright, but Codreanu only took up a lamb, and—

> "With his sorrel-horse he starts
> Down the valley to Shanta,†

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* "Ba-ți fă cruce măi mocane,
Zi că-ai cinstit pe Codrean.
. . . . .
Și s'a dus, s'a dus, s'a dus
Păn'ce soarele-a apus."

† "Și cu roibul iar plecа
Colo'n vale la Șanta.

To Shanta, the inn-keeper,
The fair one with large eyes." *

The haïdook and his mistress feast together; he takes wine without paying for it, and then rides on to *Copóu*,† and takes his meal by himself. But he is surrounded by the *Arnăutzi*.‡ A fight ensues, and he boastfully cries:—

"Woe to you, O pagan robbers—
I will give you to the dogs,
For that is all you are worth." §

But the boastful threatening is in vain:—

"But Leonti, th' Arnăut,
May the earth swallow him!
Silver buttons he takes out
And loads his rifle with them;
He aims it at Codreanu,
Darling Codreanu is wounded!" ||

The fight goes on; the popular singer follows with tears in his eyes the various turns of the contest—

"But Codrean was losing strength—
On his knees he fell, poor man,¶

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* La Șanta, la crâșmăreasă
Cu ochi mari de puică-aleasă."

† *Copóu*, "wooded hill," at the northern end of Jassy, now the promenade of the townspeople.

‡ *Arnăutzi* (sing. Arnăut), Albaneze, the prince's guard, the only army of the principalities at that time.

§ "Alelei, talhari păgâni
Cum o să vă dau la câni
Că de-atita sînteți buni!"

|| "Îar Leonti, Arnăutul,
Înghiți-l'ar pământul!
Nasturi de argint scotea
De 'ncarca o șușanea
Și 'n Codrean o slobozea
'Pe Codrenaș mi-l rânea!"

¶ "Dar Codreanu tot slăbea
Pe genunchi bietul cădea

On his palms he went leaning,
But the police, alas, caught him,
May death only befall it!" *

Codreanu is taken to Jassy, before the prince. At the prince's question as to how many Christians he has killed, he thus gives an account of his career and pursuits:—

". . . Lord, your Highness!
I vow by the Holy Virgin
Not a Christian have I killed
As long as I have roved.
When I came across a Christian
His belongings I did share:
If I met him with two horses
One I took, one I left him.
If I laid hand on his purse,
Half the contents I took out,
But where I saw the poor man,
My hatchet I hid away,
And gave him pocket money,
And a change of attire.
But where I perceived the Greek
My soul was burning hot,†

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* În palme se sprijinea
Şi potera mi-l prindea
Lega s' ar moartea de ea!"

† ". . . Domnule, Măria-Ta!
Jur pe Maica-Precista
Eu creştin n'am omorît
Cât în ţară am voinicit.
Vre-un creştin de întâlneam
Averile-i împărţeam:
Cu doi cai de-l apucam
Unu-i dam unu-i luam.
Mâna'n pungă de-i bagam
Jumatate-o deşartam.
Unde vedeam saracul
Îmi ascundeam baltagul
Şi-i dam bani de cheltuială
Şi haine de primineală.
Ear unde zăream Grecul
Mult imi ardea sufletul

Till I had his head cut off;
When I laid hold of his hair,
I brought him down to the ground,
And his head I then took off
A promised gift to the crows!" *

And then he goes on, giving the prince unasked-for advice, about not listening to the counsels of the treacherous Greeks round him, for—

"The Greek is a hostile beast,
The Greek's is a venomous tongue,
The Greek is a catching disease
Which penetrates to the bones!" †

These were the feelings the Greek had managed to develop in the Roumanian people's soul, even before the actual Greek rule, the Phanariotic Period! Codreanu is sentenced to death, but somehow he manages to escape —"with God's help," says the popular poet, and on his trusty "sorrel" takes again to the woods.

"The wood thickens its foliage,
And thus conceals the brave." ‡

Like Codreanu, there have been many other haïdooks whose names still live in people's memory; but in spite of the haïdooks, the fate of the people grew darker and darker. During the eighteenth century, most of the large properties had fallen into Greek hands—with most of the boïars accepting Grecisation as part of the bargain, too—the small properties, with but few

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* Păn ce-i rătezam capul;
În cap mâna de-i puneam
La pământ îl aduceam
Căpățina i-o tăiam
Și la corbi o juruiam!"

† "Grecu-i fieară dușmănoasă
Grecu-i limbă veninoasă
Grecu-i boală lipicioasă
Ce pătrunde păn' la oase."

‡ "Codrul frunza îndesește
Pe voinic îl mistuește."

exceptions, disappeared; the bulk of the population had fallen into servility, very much akin to genuine slavery.

The large properties being, as well as the small ones, at the mercy of the monarch, documents show repeatedly that with every change of prince, the boïars rush forward to have their deeds of property again secured to them. That the donors themselves did not much trust their successors as far as the respect to their gifts went, is proved by the formulas of security, over and over again repeated in the documents, showering blasphemies on the heads of those who would annul the gift, and calling blessings upon those who observed the conditions. For the one who would respect the deed: ". . . him may God strengthen, and save him from all evil throughout his reign, and may the holy Virgin be gracious to him at the moment of the dreaded and unavoidable last judgment. But if he does not respect the gift, may God repay him in strict justice: here below, may He bodily kill him and bring him to perdition, and in the future judgment of his soul, may the holy Virgin be against him at the dreaded judgment!"

The voyevode often deprived boïars of their lands to give them to favourites of his; the boïars, in their turn, did all they could to despoil others, weaker than they, by false documents, sometimes often by violence, and with the support of the monarch. Sometimes, by some means or other, and by a good share of luck, the despoiled got back their land, but this was reckoned as a marvel, due to some superhuman interference, so rarely did it happen. Thus it is known that a Phanariot ruler, Alex. Sutzo, wishing to take the land of the town of Târgovistea, sent his *Arnăutzi* to take it. At this unexpected intrusion the startled townsmen did not know what to do. They resisted as well as they could, but were driven back, and the *Arnăutzi* occupied the land. The despoiled townsmen decided that they would die rather than suffer such unheard-of injustice. Accordingly, they all went to church, rang the bells, and with the priests in their robes, they offered up prayers and

took the oath to hold together, and not to let the injustice be perpetrated. After that, men and women to the number of some four hundred went to Bucharest, appearing at the prince's palace, with the traditional "burning mat," rolled up and worn on the head by one of the crowd, and with a "supplication" affixed on top of a long stick, complaining of the burning wrong done them. At court they were misled by sweet, conciliatory words and induced to return quietly home, leaving behind just a few representatives to settle the matter. But these were subsequently shut up in prison, and the land taken by force, and presented to one of the boïars, the *Vornic* (Justiciary) X. The townsmen, seeing what their supplication to the monarch had led to, decided to make a supplication to God. All day long the bells were tolling, as in times of great disaster; all went to church and bitterly cursed the prince and his counsellors, while after mass, with white tapers in their hands, they came out of church and put them out by dipping them into tanks full of pitch put there for the purpose, with the curse: "Cursed may be Vornic X., and may his house melt away like this." And tradition tells that, indeed, the members of that family died soon, one after the other. But the fact is that later on, after that prince's death, his wife broke the contract and restored the land to the townsmen.

It is true also that some princes tried to defend the people against the insatiable rapacity of the boïars. At the very beginning of the Phanariotic Period, the Greek voyevode, Const. Mavrocordat, made a series of reforms, by which he hoped to better the state of the peasants in order to prevent their total emigration. He suppressed serfdom: the peasants were free to move from one estate to another, and were obliged to work for the landowner only twenty-four days in the year. On the other hand, he suppressed the old indirect taxation, in kind, leaving instead the direct taxation only, to be paid by all except the boïars, in instalments of 2½ piastres every quarter. Besides, the boïars had each, according to his title, a number of peasants allotted to pay him the taxation instead of paying it to the treasury. And yet the boïars

were not content, and incited the Porte to overthrow the monarch; but the latter kept steady, too, and bought alternatively the thrones of both countries not less than ten times over. In theory, however, serfdom was abolished in the first half of the eighteenth century, but not in practice. Towards the end of the same century, serfdom was suppressed in Transylvania also, after the revolution of Horia, in 1785, but also only on paper. In 1846 a Land Act was voted by the Diet, worse, if possible, than serfdom; the revolution of 1848 in Transylvania was partly owing to it.

The reforms of Mavrocordat in the principalities were afterwards disposed of in such a way that no shadow of them remained. With regard to the twenty-four days' labour, the boïars took them all in summer, and, moreover, fixed the amount of work to be done in that time, and in such a way that the peasant was brought to work for the landowner forty and even eighty days in the year; in fact all the summer. As for the taxation, the rulers themselves invented the very ingenious method of multiplying the quarters to twenty, and sometimes to as many as forty in a year!

But if the peasants—at least by far the greatest part of them—have seen their properties go into the hands of the large landowners, they have always had the implicit right of renting land from the landlord, as much as they wanted to, or could till, for which they paid tithes, but which they tilled entirely for themselves. Only this private tillage, this farming of land by the peasants, came into conflict with the large landowners' interests, and hence a tendency in the latter to deny the peasant the renting of land, and their exacting more and more labour for their own needs. With every change of reign, the boïars claimed from the new voyevode more rights upon peasant labour; the peasants in their turn claiming more land and less labour. The boïars usually found most response to their claims; but sometimes it happened that some rare prince bent a ready ear to the complaints of the poor. One of these was the voyevode, Gregory Ghika—whose name is connected with the loss of

Buckovina—who in the middle of the eighteenth century ruled in turn in both countries. This prince reduced the days of peasant labour due to the boïar from thirty-six, as they were at that time, to twelve—to which, however, he was obliged by the boïars to add two more; he decided also that all the boïars' properties should be divided into three parts, two of which were, as a right, to be rented to the peasants. But the boïars worked on the Sultan, and the voyevode paid with his head for his endeavour to right old wrongs. But not many monarchs have been high-minded enough to resist the rapacity of the boïars, and not many have been inclined to do it either. With the nineteenth century a new principle was established: "The land belongs to the boïars; the labourers, the '*clăcași*,' are only hirers of the land; their labour and tithes are the rent of it. The boïar gives only as much land as he wishes; and, after every five years, the boïar may turn out of his village as many labourers as he likes." Eviction in all its crudity!

No wonder, then, that with the nineteenth century the feelings of the peasants towards the boïars are of the fiercest complexion. The modern haïdook has nothing more to do with the Greek in revenge of national wrongs; the aim of his hatred, and of his rifle, is now simply the *ciocoï*, the parvenu, as he now calls the boïar, the well-to-do, whatever his origin. *Bujor* is the last type of the popular haïdook:—

"Green leaf of feathergrass,
Bujor has come out afield,
The parvenu he puts in irons
To give him pocket money." *

He is caught, imprisoned, and the people weep over him as he lies in prison:—

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* "Frunză verde de nagară,
A ieșit Bujor în țară,
Pe ciocoi îi bagă 'n fiară
Să-i dea bani de cheltuială."

"Without weapons, without sun!
Woe to you, beautiful wood,
Fine as you are in the summer
In winter you rot on the ground!
Like you Bujor in the prison
Lies down on his face."*

He is tried, he confesses his sins:—

"Death to man I have not brought
But, ciocoïs' I've beaten many."†

Asked about the hiding-place of his thefts:—

"I hid them at the trees' feet,
To be a help to the poor,
To buy themselves cows and oxen."‡

He is hanged amid the lamentations of the people:—

"The poor weep with bitter woe!"§

The race of the haïdook, now entirely extinct in the Carpathians, seems still to have active offshoots in the Pindus. Many of the robbers roving in the Turkish Empire are said to be Armâni—many of the chiefs, at least. In a badly-ruled country such as Turkey, such "bravos" are not at all an anachronism, and, after all, a thief, who, in threatening your life for the sake of your purse, exposes his own as well, seems a much worthier character than the fraudulent merchant and usurer who

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* "Fără arme, fără soare!
Oliolio codru frumos
Cît eşti vara de frumos
Iarna putrezeşti tu jos!
Ca tine Bujor în gros
Stă culcat cu faţa' njos."

† "Mort de om eu n'am făcut
Dar ciocoi mulţi am bătut."

‡ "Le-am ascuns pe la copaci
De ajutor la cei saraci
Să-şi cumpere boi şi vaci."

§ "Plâng saraci cu jale-amară."

robs you on the sly, without the slightest expenditure of courage or strength. It is, of course, a great pity that travelling in the Pindus should be made so difficult by these robbers, but the traveller knows what awaits him, and takes his measures accordingly. As you cannot travel through Russia and talk of liberty, so you cannot travel through Turkey without an escort. In Free Roumania and all the Carpathian region, the haïdook type has degenerated into the common robber, who plunders—for his own profit—rich and poor, wicked and good—a type also disappearing nowadays almost entirely, leaving behind just the common vagabond, plundering the poor rather than the well-guarded rich.

III

As to the fate of the poor, apparently because it could not become worse, it began in time slowly to turn towards improvement. After 1821 the national rulers were anxious to do better than their predecessors. Now and then better feelings make themselves felt among the ruling classes, especially with the younger generation of men, who at that time received their education in Paris, the centre of liberalism and freedom in those times.

The peasants' question began to be handled with more and more interest in some quarters. The revolution of 1848 was not only political, it was a social revolution as well. The proclamation of the "Provisional Government" declared the peasant master of the land he occupied—as hirer till now—and free from labour. A commission was accordingly instituted, composed of boïars and peasants to settle their differences. The peasants claimed the land in return for pecuniary compensation; the boïars objected strongly, on the ground that the peasants had no means wherewith to pay. As an answer, one of the peasants is said to have thrust forward his sinewy, sunburnt arm and replied: "These arms, which for centuries have been feeding you, these arms will work with increased industry, when that will

mean the paying for our liberation, when we shall be masters of our soil and of our arms." The Russo-Turkish intervention prevented any further discussion. The immediate results of 1848 were more favourable in Transylvania. Imperial ordinances regulated the giving of land to the peasants and the paying of an indemnity to the noble landlords, but the weakening of Austria in 1866 brought it all to nought.

Thenceforth things were in a period of awakening; the peasants' question was stirred deeper and deeper; their claims to the land took an ever more definite shape; some change was in the air; that the peasants must get the soil, some way or other, was certain. And need of land was the more stringent, since the treaty of Adrianople (1829) had opened the commerce of the principalities to Western Europe. Agricultural products were more required and better paid for; agriculture drove sheep and cattle breeding into the background altogether, to become the staple bread winning of the peasant. But the very same reason made the boïars so much the more loath to part with the land, and so much the more rapacious about peasant labour, without which the commercial advantages, won by treaty of 1829, were of no avail to them. The giving of land to peasants had been proposed ever since 1848, on the understanding that the *clacasi* (the labouring peasants), should get all the land they used to rent from the boïar. Some provident boïars took measures in consequence. Some of them presented their clacashi with their liberty, they gave up any claim on their labour. This was very fine, and the peasants were full of gratitude, but when the Land Act came, it found them free men, *not* clacashi, and, consequently, with *no* claim on the land. Other boïars, again, turned out their peasants by cruel treatment; these ran away into the outskirts of towns mostly; the new law found them free of labour, and they got no land.

At last the bright day of 1864 came. The first prince of *United* Roumania, Cuza, tried, in accordance with his ministers and Parliament, to bring about the reforms so sorely needed by the country. But the great majority of

the boïars were still against the giving of land to peasants, which the monarch seeing, he decided to accomplish his reforms by a *coup d'état.* In August, 1864, Prince Cuza declared by a decree that the peasants were henceforth proprietors. In his Proclamation, he recognised the peasants as free proprietors of the land of which they only had been the occupiers till then. The land was theirs, the peasants had to pay nothing for it. What they had to pay for was their *labour*, which was implicitly recognised as a right of the boïars, and in order to be freed of this labour the peasants had to pay an indemnity to the landowners. The peasants became masters of the stretches of land they formerly used only to hire, and of which three categories were made, according to the state of wealth of the peasants at that moment. They remained free of any labour obligation towards the proprietor, paying it off in money, also in three varied categories. On the other hand, the large landowners remained also untroubled masters of their land, the peasants having no claim whatever upon it. Thus in 1864 some 1,500,000 hectares of land were allocated to some 407,000 new landowners, small landowners, besides the remnant of old peasant landowners, the *răzăshi*, or *moshneni*, who were found to be still in existence, to the number of some 117,000, owning still among themselves an amount of land equal to that newly divided among the clacashi.

At the time of the Land Act of 1864, the south of Bassarabia belonged again to Roumania—restored by the Treaty of Paris, 1856—so that the new Act was put in force there too. When Russia took it back again, she somehow accepted the new state of things, the more so as the situation of the Russian peasants themselves had been improved by the suppression of serfdom in Russia, 1861–69. Thus the economic fate of the Roumanian peasants in Bassarabia was nearly similar to that of Free Roumania.

With all its drawbacks, with all the vices of its application, the Land Act of 1864 was of great importance in the peasants' life, and the name of Cuza is a legendary

one to the present day. There are peasants who won't believe that he is dead, but strongly hope that some day he will come to give full effect to his law, and give land to all peasants who need it. Why, the name of Cuza has even been used as an electioneering resource by too able candidates hunting after a seat in Parliament! But not long after, one had to come to the conclusion that, if something had indeed been done by the Act of 1864, much more remained to be done. There were very many landless peasants still; and there were, moreover, peasants having too little land for their needs. At the time of the war of independence, before the troops crossed the Danube, they were addressed in terms fit to arouse their courage, and land was promised them, as in the happy times of Stephen the Great. And they fought bravely, these young sons of Roumania, and independence was won. But promises had to be kept also, and in 1879 a new Act was voted by the Roumanian Parliament, giving land to newly-married peasants. Some 48,000 men got property by this law, two-thirds of which went to constitute new communes with new villages.

But more land was required still, there being some 79,000 peasant families without land; peasants from all parts of the country petitioned for land, the governments in their turn promised it, but all to no effect. In 1880, as there was a talk of new distributions of land, peasants came to Bucharest from the very northernmost districts of Moldavia to ask for land, having been told that they could get it—and they had come *on foot* all the way down, and their journey had lasted one whole month! For a while, however, nothing more was done; on the contrary, the situation of the peasants went from bad to worse. Proprietors and farmers did all they could to oppress the peasants; statesmen of the highest rank have had to recognise in Parliament that the "communal authorities, mayor, notary, and the rest, instead of being friends and guardians of peasants, had only been their oppressors and despoilers." It has ever been difficult for the peasant to get justice, and even when they could obtain it, only an indifferent ear was lent to their complaints: "Why, that

is the way with peasants, they always complain!" Many large proprietors found the way to lay hands on the little land of the peasants; and great abuses were committed with regard to labour. In 1866 an Act for "agricultural conventions" was voted, entitling the peasant to sell his labour for five years in advance at the landowner's price, giving, moreover, to the latter the right to enforce *manu militari*, the execution of that labour, with the exception, however, of two days in the week, Friday and Saturday, which had to be respected for the peasant's own labour in his own field. Instead of that, the peasant was compelled by the landowner, supported by the authorities, to work for him all the week round, being shut up on Sundays, into the bargain, in order that he might not run away. The Roumanian peasant is extremely patient, and has a wonderful power of bearing up, but everything has an end, and, "when the knife has reached to the bone," he won't stand it any longer. In 1888 a peasant rising took place. It was considered very dangerous, and put down with great display of violence and cruelty, although single cases have clearly shown that it might have been just as easily quieted down by peaceful means. But in such matters excess of zeal is more or less unavoidable. It is none the less true that rulers of both political parties—Conservatives as well as Liberals—have agreed that the peasants were in the right, that they had, indeed, only too long been wronged and oppressed on all sides, and that something ought to be done for them. In 1889 a new Act was voted, allowing the sale of the State-land in small lots to the peasants—the smaller of them at least. In this way, some 1,850,000 hectares have been disposed of in favour of the peasants.

To-day, of the 13,135,000 hectares constituting the whole property of the Roumanian soil, some 4,400,000 constitute the small and middle property, of some 889,287 peasants; the large property, of some 4,061 large landowners, is made up of more than 5½ millions, whilst the State owns still over 2½ millions, and the domain of the Crown amounts to over 130,000 hectares.

But there are still landless peasants; and there are

peasants who have only very little land—through division among inheritors—too little land, indeed, to live upon. In this case are very many of the old *răzăshi*, the old nobility of this country, the *răzăshi* whose wealth consists of "a span of land, with a bagful of papers," and who only too often have reason to sing:—

"May fire burn the 'razashie'!
I thought it was nobility
But it is pure poverty!"* . . .

The peasant land question is by no means concluded; the process of giving them land has not reached its end, and, moreover, it is to be expected that with the progress of agricultural methods, there will be plenty of land for all, and for a much larger population than nowadays.

Roumania has also extensive forests, common property of all in old times, but the law of 1864 suppressed any claim of the peasants on them. Except some 321,000 hectares of woods owned by the *răzăshi*, no peasant possesses such. Of a total of nearly 3,000,000 hectares of woods, the State owns about half, two-thirds of which are more or less under exploitation, the remnant being as yet untouched; the rest is private property. The Roumanian peasant is very fond of the woods: he has songs for almost every kind of tree, but all connected with the time when the woods were his hiding-place and his beloved abode. The oak is "his brother," the elm "his first cousin"; he scorns the conceited lofty poplar, and calls down blessings on the "broad-leaved lime," sheltering him in time of flight, and giving him a pleasant shade in the sultry days of summer. His desertion of the wood-roaming life he deplores in music and song:—

"I go off, the wood remains,
The leaf is weeping after me;†

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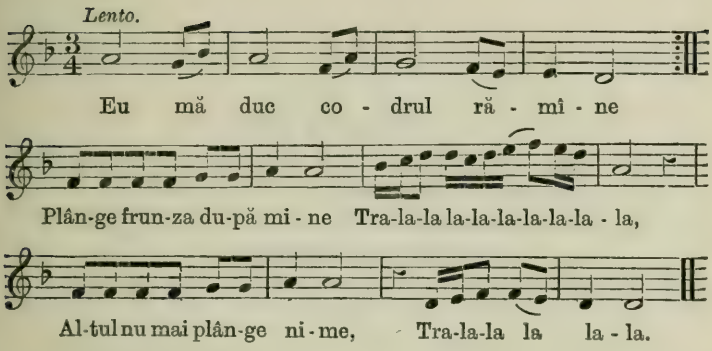
* "Ard' o focul răzășie!
Eu chitcam că-i boierie
Și-i numai o sărăcie!" . . .

† "Eu mă duc codrul rămîne,
Plînge frunza după mine;

No one else is there to weep
For I have done no good deed,
And if I have done some wrong
I alone shall bear for it." *



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* Altul nu mai plânge nime
Că n' am făcut nici un bine,
Și dac' am făcut vr 'un rău
Singur mi-l' oiu trage eu!"

CHAPTER II

THE PEASANT IN THE SOCIAL SCALE

TYPES AND COSTUMES

I

From the very birth of the Roumanian nation there probably have existed class differences in Dacia, just those that existed in the Roman Empire at large. During the thousand years of invasions that ensued, when the population which remained in Dacia was driven into the highest recesses of the mountains, and was obliged to rely upon pastoral life, those differences may be fairly believed to have been obliterated, if they still existed, and little by little patriarchal habits set in with the new ways of life. Social equality may well be assumed to have reigned in those remote, simple times. But as time went on some of the herdsmen would begin to rise above their fellow labourers. Whilst some of them went on still pasturing their own sheep, cows, or pigs, others managed to have the work done by other herdsmen. Whilst these remained with their coarse sheepskins and neglected appearance, the others contrived to improve themselves and to pay more and more attention to cleanliness and dress. This difference went on growing. When the shepherds began to settle down and to till the ground, it is quite possible that the richer ones managed to lay hands on larger portions of land; others in poorer conditions associated to take common possession of some other land, on absolutely equal terms;

others, again, remained behind to mind the pigs. Thus, when later on the Roumanian nation came to the first dim understanding of the notion of a state, a social distinction practically existed already among the Roumanians, and that distinction was based—like any social distinction at its beginning—on difference of wealth. It is notorious that the Hungarians found a nobility in Transylvania, which nobility merged into the Hungarian nobility; those who did not care to merge went away and founded Valachia and Moldavia. There they found a nobility too, whom they took to their bosom—except those who may have resisted, and had either to go away or to submit. The oldest recollections of this nobility may have had their roots as far back as the time of the first Bulgarian Empire; at any rate, it was reconstructed according to the model of the Bulgarian organisation beyond the Danube, whence the whole political and social scheme was taken, modelling itself on the Byzantine institutions. The Roumanian nobles adopted the title of *Boïars* (from the Slav *Boljar*), and were addressed with the appellation of *jupân*, which was as much as "sir," or perhaps "my lord"; the women were *jupănese* ("ladies"), and the young women *jupănitze*. Those nobles were proprietors of land, large or small, and they all lived on their lands. Below them were the peasants, of whom a large number were also landowners, the *răzăshi* or *moshneni*, of whom the prince author, Demetrius Cantimir (Prince of Moldavia at the beginning of the eighteenth century), says, that he does not know where to place them, at the head of the peasants or at the tail of the boïars. The poorest peasants seem still to have had their land property in common, and it is not in the least to be wondered at if *every* peasant had land when we know that there was so much of it, and that the founders of the principalities, the first voyevodes, found such a large amount of waste land.

In what consisted the difference between these boïars and peasants? As far as documents and human memory can account for it, the difference was only a material one; the difference of all times between the more or less

refined rich man and the more or less rough poor man. There was no written law, and custom equalised all. There was no right of firstborn and no indivision of property for the boïars — boïars or peasant's children had equal rights in their parent's inheritance. There was no dispensation from taxation for the boïar, who, like the peasant, paid the tithe and all the indirect taxes, the latter being, however, alone subject to the direct tax, the *bir*. There was no difference in the military service, which everybody was obliged to perform.

In those times there seems to have been plenty of free intercourse and amicable feeling between rich and poor; the rich had not yet become egoistic and greedy; the poor had not found room for envy and hatred in their hearts. Moreover, there seems to have existed a good deal of esteem among the poor for the rich. The latter, being in a better material position, could afford to cultivate much more freely those moral qualities which, more or less dimly, have always formed the groundwork of the Roumanian soul—probably of the human soul at large; he could afford to be more generous, more high-minded, wiser even, as he had more time to give to thinking than the toiling poor; he had to bow his head to nobody, and got into the habit of not bending it at all. Those superior qualities, expected to spring up in well-to-do beings, were readily acknowledged by popular fancy, and duly admired in the outpourings of the poetical imagination. In one of the finest ballads collected in old Moldavia, the popular poet draws a picture of a boïar of those times, "Toma Alimosh":—

"There, on the ridge of those hills,
By the ditch with the five hazels
Shooting out from a single trunk,
Like five brothers from one mother,*

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* "Colo'n zarea celor culmi
La groapa cu cinci aluni
Ce răsar dintr'o tulpină
Ca cinci fraţi de la o mumă

Sits down Toma Alimosh
A boïar from the lowland." *

Not far from him his horse, tied to a silver tether, feeds on the grass, while the boïar partakes also of a light meal; he eats and drinks, but complains of being alone, and having nobody to drink with: the hospitable boïar is used to cheerful companions at his table. Hopeless of a human partner, he will drink to the trees on the height:—

"I will drink to the elms,
The giants of the heights,
For they are ready to answer
With gay whisper of the leaves,
And in the air they will swing
And to me they will bow." †

But as he says this he hears the neighing of a horse; he rises slowly, as becomes a dignified boïar and a fearless man, and catches sight of a man approaching on horseback; it is *Mane*, the *hoțoman*, the rough thief in rough attire:—

"The thief, tall, with heavy mane,
Like a heavy, leafy oak.
It was Mâne, the broad-shouldered,
With a big and woolly sheepskin—
The sheepskin turned inside out, ‡

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* Șade Toma—Alimos
Boier din țara de jos."

† "Închina-voiŭ ulmilor
Urieșii culmilor,
Că sînt gata să-mi răspundă
Cu freamăt voios de frunză
Și 'n văzduh s' or clătina
Și mie s' or închina."

‡ "Hoțomanul nalt, pletos
Cum e un stejar stufos:
Era Mane cel spătos
Cu cojoc mare mițos
Cu cojoc întors pe dos

And with his unpeeled club,
Roughly hewn with the hatchet."*

He advances upon the boïar and addresses him rudely, seeking a quarrel:—

". . . Well, then, Toma Alimosh,
You boïar from the lowland,
Why do you tread on our lands
And crush down our hayfields?"†

But the good-natured boïar does not lose temper; he bears no ill-will, and asks his rough fellow-man to drink with him:—

"But the boïar Alimosh
Gives him the gourd with red wine:
—Your health, O brother Mäne!
Throw your anger behind you,
Let us drink an equal share."‡

The thief takes the drink with his left hand, while with his right he draws his dagger and treacherously strikes the unsuspicious boïar in the stomach, and then, like a coward, takes to flight. But the boïar, with an imprecation on the traitor who has "robbed him of his days," rises as well as he can, presses in his stomach, girds himself tight with his broad girdle, and mounts, addressing his horse:—

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* Şi cu ghioaga nestrujită
Numai din topor cioplită."

† ". . . Aleĭ! Toma Alimoş
Boier din ţara de jos
Ce ne calci moşiile
Şi ne strîci fineţele?"

‡ "Boier Toma Alimoş,
Îi dă plosca cu vin roş
—Să trăieşti Mane fârtate!
Dă-ţi mâniea după spate
Ca să bem în jumatate."

"'Woe to us, dear little bay,
Woe, oh my own brave bay!
If you could in your old age
Go as you could in your youth!'
The bay's bright eye lit up,
He neighed, and thus gave reply:
—'Take my mane and leap on me,
And do hold fast to the end,
That I may show in old age
What I was worth in my youth!'"*

And on and on they storm away, the old boïar still urging his horse:—

"Halloo, dear little bay,
Halloo, O my brave bay,
Lay yourself on the road
Like the grass on the field
To the blast of the wind!"†

The thief is overtaken, and the brave boïar, in the very rush of the flight, cuts him in two pieces, punishing him thus for the treacherous deed, for which the popular singer finds no words strong enough:—

"You have struck me villainously
And run away like a coward!"‡

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* "'Alelei murguleț mic
Alei murgul men voinic!
De-ai putea la bătrânețe
Cum puteai la tinerețe!'
Murgul ochi 'și aprindea
Necheza și răspundea:
—'Eată coama, sai pe mine
Și de-acum te ține bine
Să-ți arăt la bătrânețe
Ce puteam la tinerețe!'"

† "Aleleĭ murguleț mic!
Alei murgul men voinic!
Așterne-te drumului
Ca și iarba cîmpului
La suflarea vântului!"

‡ "Tăiatu-m'ai tălhărește
Fugitu-mi-ai mișelește!"

says the boïar. But his strength is at an end; he is dying. He asks his horse to carry him back under the high elms, there to dig him a grave with his hoofs, and lay him down with his teeth:—

"The elms will swing,
The leaves will fall
And cover my body." *

In the oldest times the boïars used to live on their properties; the voyevode had at his court a number of officials for his private service and that of the State, but these occupied only a lower rank in the hierarchy of boïardom, as is obvious from the documents signed by the boïars, in which the untitled boïars—those living in the country—occupied the place of honour, immediately after the sovereign, whilst the boïars fulfilling any function, and provided with a title, came only second, each in the order allowed by the importance of his office. For, although the monarch was absolute in the gravest State matters, giving of judgments, &c., he used, nevertheless, to call a council of the boïars, the *Divan*, to take advice from them, though he was under no obligation to follow it. But there were boïars who never went to Court, and that for many a reason; a comparative poverty, perhaps, preventing them from competing with other wealthier boïars in that state of life; perhaps through shyness; or perhaps independence of character, unwillingness to make the curtsey and to kiss hands—all this may well have kept them away, vegetative as they were, so to speak, in their country seats. There, of course, not keeping in touch with capital and Court, they must have remained rather behind the time in fashion and refined courtly usages; on the other hand, the right of the firstborn, preserving property undivided, has never existed with the Roumanians, hence the children became, as a rule, even poorer than the parents, so that rank was

* "Ulmii că s' or clătina
Frunza că s'a scutura
Trupul că mi-a astupa."

still harder to keep up. The succeeding generations of these boïars became sometimes very poor, the more so that their retirement made the rehabilitation of their properties, through donations from the voyevode, impossible, but they were still recognised as boïars, under the title of *boïeri de tara* ("country boïars," or "rustic boïars"). In the long run these rustic boïars, with properties that grew smaller and smaller, fell to the rank of mere *răzăshi*, to share afterwards their varying fate, and fall lower still in the succeeding generations, into the dark state of serfdom.

We have seen that means have existed even for the *răzăshi* of reconstructing their lost properties, but these facts were rather accidents in the regular stream of downfall, which accidents became scarcer and scarcer for boïar as well as for peasant, in proportion as the domains of the monarch decreased, to disappear at last altogether. But the voyevode had it in his power to give not only property, but nobility as well. The legend of the *Aprodul Purice* goes back to the time of Stephen the Great. In one of the battles of this warlike prince he had his horse killed; one of his soldiers, the *Aprod* (a Court servant), Purice, gave him his horse. But the great monarch seems to have been only a small man, so that he was unable to mount off the ground, on which Purice said: "My lord, allow me to stoop and make of my back a little mound, stepping on which, you may easily mount;" and on mounting the prince said, "My poor Purice, if I and you come both safe out of this war, I will change your name of *Purice* (flea) to that of *Movilă*" (mound). And so it came about. After the victorious war the aprod was made a boïar with the name of Movilă, and became the root of a family which one century later even ascended the throne. In this way many a common person may have risen to the noble rank of boïar, but as to the worthiness of the selected we may be allowed to have our doubts, as this promotion was entirely at the monarch's caprice. That is also the reason that the rewarding of a really meritorious man with a title of nobility appears such a doubtful distinction; if the title had always been

the outcome of merit there would be nothing to say against it.

Thus peasants could sometimes become boïars, and boïars could still more easily become peasants by the division of property. But the descent was not reserved to "rustic boïars" only; it could just as easily befall boïars of the highest position and wealth. Thus, as already seen, the boïars began very early to divide into parties, supporting this or that pretender to the throne. The successful monarch always had rewards for his supporters and punishments for his opponents, consisting chiefly in gifts and confiscations of land respectively. In proportion as the voyevode's domain (the source of rewards) diminished, the strife and struggle between the boïars became keener; when the prince had no more land to give away he began to reward his supporters with courtly functions. Then it was that the official places increased so much in value that they were more sought after, because they conferred a title which brought to the bearer various revenues and privileges; these posts were called *boïerii*, increased with the demand, and, although the voyevode needlessly multiplied those functions, they were still never sufficient to quench the thirst of the boïars for more or less lucrative distinctions. The rivalries and intriguing went on increasing, but in the long run the voyevode took from the Turks the habit of using his boïars as he himself was used by the Turks; as the Turks could at will expel the voyevode by a simple decree of *ma'zul*, so the voyevode dismissed the boïars from their functions, sending them from Court away into rustic obscurity, where they were designated under the name of *boïars mazili*. These ex-boïars fell to the condition of the rustic boïars, to sink with them as low as fate would bring them. Sometimes, no doubt, the disgrace of the mazil boïars was transitory, but often, also, they were never able to rise again.

The natural outcome of all this was that the social ladder of the Roumanian people has been a very much trodden one, up and down, and that it would be hard work to find out where peasantry stopped and where

nobility began, as they went for ever turning on the wheel of fortune.

II

The political events in both countries, the falling into Turkish vassaldom, the traffic made by the Turks with the Roumanian thrones, the need of the prince ever to befriend the boïars, the heavy taxation to make up the large sums to be paid at Constantinople, all this told heavily on the wealth of the people, and on their social relations. At the end of the sixteenth century, *serfdom* is already officially sanctioned by a decree of the Valachian prince, Michael the Brave. In Moldavia, no act whatever came to sanction serfdom; nevertheless the thing existed, just as it did in Valachia. During the seventeenth century we have also seen that a great influx of Greeks set in, and that several of the sovereigns of this period are Greek adventurers. The Greeks who had entered the countries as creditors and friends of the prince, were presented with offices, became boïars, intermarried—under the voyevode's compulsion mostly—with boïar families, got hold of their properties by fair means or by foul, supplanting thus little by little the national nobility. In the eighteenth century the bulk of the Roumanian nobility seemed entirely Greek, made up of Greek adventurers, and altogether Greek-speaking boïars; for the Greek, with the ostentatious pride of an old civilised nation, and with his talent for intruding and intriguing, pressed so heavily on the guileless Roumanian boïar, that the latter did all he could to learn Greek, and to adopt Greek fashions, in order not to be ignored in high society or at court, where the Greek monarch was the sun by which all nobility regulated its pace. But the people knew best what to think of it all. "Cake-maker in Greece or prince in Roumania," is a proverb that arose in that epoch, implying the humble origin of most of the Greek rulers, and the poverty of the situations to be got in their own fatherland. When a boy was born, the Greek midwife—they said—pinched his nose with the

above-mentioned prophetic wish for his welfare—the best situation in the world, to Greek minds, being either to sell cakes at home or else to occupy a Roumanian throne.

Now, if the old national nobility had not always fostered the Roumanian peasant, one can easily imagine what the Greek must have been. The Greek tax-gatherer was much abler at his business than the Roumanian had been; the peasants were reduced to utter misery, and were submitted to the cruellest tortures to extort money from them. And the Roumanian boïars joined in the game, for those who did not had to retire to the shade as good for nothing; the old "defender" of the country has become its decided oppressor; the name boïar is the same, but the thing is altogether different.

In these conditions, no wonder that the split between peasant and boïar became so deep that they looked upon each other as beings of quite different origin, which, indeed, was true in most cases. Their reciprocal feelings were greatly affected by the change. What was once generosity, good will, condescension on one side, respect and ready admiration on the other, now became greed, contempt, cruelty in the former, hatred and spirit of revenge in the latter. The peasant knew very well that the boïar held his own only by cowardice and humiliation before the prince; for him the boïar is now a characterless being who

> "To alms (receiving)
> Rushes forward,
> In war
> Draws backward."*

The Greek never earned anything but hatred and contempt from the Roumanian folk. Whenever there is a traitor in a ballad it is sure to be a Greek, for

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* "La pomană
Dă navală,
La răsboi
Dă înapoi."

"The Greek is an accursed soul,
Overloaded with sins." *

A scoundrel cannot but be a Greek; a

"... man cowardly as all Greeks,
Who well knows how to tear off
The very shirt from one's body;
They take cattle, oxen, horses,
They take everything you possess." †

When the upper class was filled with the Greek element, when the Roumanian nobility was merged in that Greek element, what wonder that the feeling of the peasant for the Greek extended to the whole upper class? And these feelings, were they of a nature to inspire poetry and song? They did inspire songs of a kind. The boïar was thenceforth nothing but a parvenu, a *ciocoï* (*tchiocoy* = parvenu), *ciocoï gulerat* (collared parvenu), a being who had hardly the value of a man in the peasant's eye. The haïdook Bujor says—

"Death of *man* I have not caused
But ciocoï I have thrashed many." ‡

An injury done to a ciocoï is not considered a wrong; submission, obedience to rulers of the ciocoï make, is considered a shame. Jianu, a boïar's son, turned haïdook, is reported to have said—

"Rather than to humble myself,
I prefer to be a haïdook." §

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* "Grecu-i suflet blastamat
De pacate încarcat."

† "... Om mişel ca şi toţi Greciï
Ce stiu ca să-ţi iea prea bine
Chiar cămeşa de pe tine;
Îţi ieau vite, boi şi cai
Îţi ieau tot şi tot ce ai."

‡ "Mort de om eu n'am făcut
Dar ciocoï mulţi am bătut."

§ "Decât să mă căciulesc
Mai bine să haiducesc!"

Under such circumstances the Roumanian lute was inclined to be dumb. What the popular poet sees round him is not worth singing, and the only feelings for which he finds utterance are not at all ideal. However, the world is not quite as empty and dull as it looks. The Roumanian popular poet is high-minded, large-hearted. Now and then he will forget his own sorrows, and shed a sympathetic tear on the cruel death of the Valachian voyevode, Constantin Brancoveanu, executed at Constantinople for intriguing with the Russians. The people's sympathy is with—

"Brancoveanu Constantin,
Ancient boïar, and Christian prince" *—

the boïar of old family, who prefers death for his sons and himself rather than forsake Christianity. Yet Brancoveanu was one of the greatest extortionists of taxation; but the generous peasant passes over that for the sake of his higher virtues. In the same way he will follow with undivided interest the vicissitudes and misfortunes of a Moldavian boïar, Iordacki a Lupului, and lament over his untimely death. This boïar, one of the old stamp, living in the eighteenth century under the Phanariotes, aware of the hatred his voyevode nourishes against him, emigrates to the Tartars in the Crimea, where he is welcomed in a friendly manner by the Khan, who promises to support him with the Sultan and get him a *ferman* (decree) of nomination to the throne, to which he also means to help him with a Tartar army. But the good patriot, the honest Moldavian, declines:—

"No, I shall take no army,
For the country will curse me: †

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* "Brancoveanu Constantin
Boier vechiŭ şi domn creştin."

† "Ba eu oaste n'oiŭ lua
Că ţara m'a blastama.

Who brings hosts into the land,
May he die under the land's curse!" *

But the voyevode succeeds in coaxing back the exiled boïar by treacherous promises, to which the artless boïar decides to respond favourably, against all the warnings of the more experienced Khan. Attended by a few followers, he returns back to his "fair Maria," to his country place, and hence, with a large suite sent by the prince, they start for Jassy, although the omens are bad.

"For the window slammed,
And fell to the ground,
Without breath of wind,
And a gilded holy-image
Split without a stroke." †

As soon as the boïar Iordacki has presented himself before the prince, the latter, without any further delay, orders the executioner to cut off the boïar's head at once, but the boïar receives the man with such a blow that he fells him to the ground. The proud boïar does not fear death, but he will not have it at the executioner's hand. He tenders his sword to his trusty follower, Lissandre, with the words—

"Take thou my sword
And cut off my head with it
And it won't hurt." ‡

But Lissandre,§ "sighing deeply," declines the dreadful service—

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* Cine-aduce oasten 'n tară
Sub blăstămul ţerei piară!"

† "Că fereastra se isbea
Şi cădea jos la pămînt,
Fără suflare de vânt,
Şi-o icoană poleită
Trosnea făr 'a fi lovită."

‡ "Ţine tu sabiea mea
De-mi taie capul cu ea
Că nicī cum nu m'a durea."

§ Lissandre—Lissandru, diminutive from Alexandru.

". . . My master!
Your bread and salt I have eaten
Do not drive me into sin!" * †

The Arnâutzi rush on the unhappy boïar, and he is killed, but his unfortunate wife Maria takes up the head and, embracing it, curses the prince dreadfully. The curse is fulfilled, as the ballad tells us:—

"Green leaf of sand-weed
Great fire is ablaze in Jassy
The flame reaches to Mileshti,
The brands spring up to Goleshti,
The sparks fly to Bărlăneshti,
And as far as Ciocăneshti
And carry the dreadful news
That Iordaki has perished,
And that fire has sprung up
From the tremendous curse." ‡

III

But the age of the ballad was gone by. The impressions from outside were of such a colour now as to arouse only feelings of deeper and deeper sorrow and suffering from inside, and when the heart was too full of sadness, the admiring epopee was silenced, and lyrical utterances only were heard. The economic and social troubles were

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* ". . . Stăpânul meu!
Pânea, sarea, ţi-am mâncat
Nu mă vârâ la pacat!"

† The Roumanian peasant considers it a greater sin to betray or kill a former master than any one else.

‡ "Frunză verde siminoc
La Ieş arde mare foc
Bate para prin Mileşti
Sar tăciunii în Goleşti
Scânteile 'n Bărlăneşti
Până pe la Ciocăneşti
Şi duc vestea de' ngrozit
Că Iordaki a perit
Şi că focul a sbucnit
Din blăstămul cel cumplit."

ample material for popular complaint; it filled the poet's life, it regulated his movements. There were still *răzăshi* left, but they were obliged to keep in continual strife with the boïar, and endless lawsuits made them weary of the way to town, where they were dragged over and over again, with a "bag of papers for a patch of land"—to come at last home again, oftener *without* than *with* that patch of land. In the popular mind boïardom has become one more national evil beside the invasions of pagans and the plunder of foreigners; the composer of the *doïnas* (popular songs) puts them on the same level as those evils. The crow is supposed to say—

"I would eat hearts out of bosoms
And I would drink pagan blood;
I would eat kidneys of horse,
And I would drink blood of Russians;
I should like to eat oak leaves
And I would drink blood of Tartar;
I would eat honeycombs in hives,
And would drink blood of ciocoï!"*

The ciocoï was considered the extremity of evil as appears from this epicurean crescendo of the Crow's ghastly bill of fare.

The difficulties of life made the peasant often weary of household and family; he would desert his falling cottage, in which all the winter long he has been struggling against the bitter cold.

"The drop has fallen on me,
The north wind has frozen me,†

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* "Aș mânca inimi din sân
Și-aș bea sânge de păgân;
Aș mânca rărunchi de cal
Și-aș bea sânge de Moscal;
Aș mânca foi de stejar
Și-aș bea sânge de Tatar
Aș mânca faguri de roi
Și-aș bea sânge de ciocoï!"

† "Picătura m'a picat,
Crivățul m'a înghețat,

The smoke has besmoked me,
And my sorrel-horse has collapsed." *

With the coming of May he takes to the thickening woods, driven out by despair, with his revengeful *ghioaga* (club) on his shoulder :—

"Tax is heavy, labour hard,
Woe is me, O dear mother mine!
Where'er I go and whate'er I do,
Of troubles I can't get rid,
And nowhere do I find rest.
For very fear of the sheriff,
And for dread of the taxation
I forgot the way to the village,
And the horns of the plough:
I took the way of the grove,
And the footpath to the wood,
And the rifle of the haïdook.
For, rather than beggary,
Far better is robbery,
Whatever God's will may be!" †

His sufferings are unbearable ; he takes upon himself the sole responsibility of righting his wrongs, and then he will regulate his accounts with God, for whom, says he, "peasant and boïar is all one." He trusts that,

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* Fumul că m'a afumat,
Roibul că mi-a leşinat."

† "Biru-i greu, podveada grea
Sărăcuţ de maica mea!
Unde merg şi ori-ce fac
De belele nu mai scap
Nicăiri nu maĭ încap.
De frica zapciului
Şi de groaza birului
Uităi drumul satului
Şi coarnele plugului:
Luăi drumul crîngului
Şi poteca codrului
Şi flinta haiducului.
Că, decît în calicie
Mai bine în haiducie
Ce-a vrea Dumnezeu să fie!"

wicked though his behaviour may be, the many wrongs done to him will make the balance even before the Almighty Judge. He has no more patience left; he dares to threaten the boïar openly:—

"Green leaf of chervil,
I met once with a ciocï:
'Good way to thee, *thou* Roumanian!'
'Thank you, dog of a ciocï!'
'Thou ruffian, thou art drunk.'
'Bark on, collared ciocoï,
For to-day I took no food.'
'Thou ruffian, evil villain,
I shall settle this with thee
When heavy taxation comes!'
'Woe to thee! Son of ciocoï
May I catch thee in the field
To soften thee with my club,
That I may take off thy skin
And wrap in that skin of thine
My pistols and my rifle;
That the wind may not touch them,
That the rain may not rust them
Nor the eye catch sight of them!'"*

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* "Frunză verde baraboi
Mă 'ntîlnii cu un ciocoi:
'Buna cale măi Române
'Mulțumesc ciocoi de câne!
'Măi mojice, tu eşti bat.
'Latră ciocoi gulerat
Că eu astă-zi n'am mâncat!'
'Măi mojice, mojic rău
Las'că mi te-oi drege eu
Când a veni birul greu!"
"Alelei! Pui de ciocoi
De te-aş prinde la zăvoi
Să-ți dau măciuci să te moi
De piele să te despoi
Ca să 'mbrac cu pielea ta
Pistoalele şi flinta.
Vîntul să nu le pălească
Ploi să nu le rugineasca
Ochiul să nu le zăreaseă!"

This is the pass to which the relations between boïars and peasants had come, whom we saw to be friends in the old times, whom we have witnessed changing places over and over again. The old nobility had for the most part disappeared among the much-tried peasantry; the upper ranks had been filled with a nobility which, if not entirely strange, was at any rate entirely estranged from the nation. The aim of the Phanariotes in their more than century-long reign, had been to Grecise the Roumanians, and it really looked very much like success for them, with all those boïars speaking a more or less grammatical Greek, and the poor Roumanian tongue banished from good society. But the peasants never learned Greek, no, not they: they kept alive the sacred spirit of nationality embodied in its language, fallen all within their care! And yet, when the Phanariotic rule was at an end, lo! all the Greeks had disappeared, as if swept away by magic power. The fact is, that with all their striving to Grecise the Roumanians, the Greeks themselves were becoming insensibly Roumanised! The curtain had hardly fallen on the Phanariotic comedy, when Roumanian courts with national princes revealed a majority of Roumanian nobles, speaking Roumanian, forgetting their Greek in no time, offended if called Greeks, never desiring or dreaming to be Greeks again. Time had done its work; their descendants were indeed Roumanians—some of them quite good Roumanians indeed, in the long run. But the reciprocal feeling was not much improved all the same; the economic and social state of the peasants remaining the same, there was, of course, no place for improvement in feelings. Moreover, the national, or nationalised, boïars of the beginning of the nineteenth century displayed such egoism as to startle even the Russian Kisseleff. By the "Organic Regulations," a constitution imposed by the Russians—during the occupation of the principalities in 1828–34—the boïars succeeded in getting privileges second to none in Europe; their military service was even dispensed with, a service considered as a duty and an honour even by the worst of nobles in the worst of times! The oppression of the peasants reached its climax.

But 1848 was near at hand. Risings were prepared in both countries, by young men, nobles and non-nobles, awakened to liberal ideas by what was going on in Western Europe. The rising in Moldavia was paralysed from the very start. One anecdote tells us that the young boïars, caught in the act of conspiring against their monarch, were arrested, taken to the barracks, stretched down and lashed with twenty-five rods a-piece —a great breach of the boïar privileges, for thrashing was still an official punishment, but the boïars were exempted from it. The thrashed boïars escaped, however, and fled to the mountains, trying to start a rising among the peasants. In their eagerness to bring home to the slow peasant mind the need of a rising against the oppressive monarch, they took as example the very wrongs done to them: "Good men, just consider the lawlessness of this prince; he has actually thrashed *us!*" "Well," answered the peasant quietly, "you see, things stand thus: the boïars thrash us, and *voda* (voyevode) thrashes the boïars!"

The strained feelings between peasant and boïar could not give way but with the gradual improvement of the former's condition, and hardly anything was done in that way before the union of the two countries. But, independently of their material troubles, the peasants were quite alive to the idea of unity; it seems to have been brooding in their bosoms all through the ages, so readily did they take to it. In truth, the union was made by the people at large rather than by the boïars. With all that the peasants were not so silly as not to understand that if they were wanted to make the union, the boïars would still have the best of it, with the least trouble possible, and that the peasants in their turn were not very backward in bringing their feelings home to the boïars, may be illustrated by the following anecdote reported by the most popular of Roumanian writers, Ion Creangă, an anecdote which, I dare say, will fit more than one country.

In 1857, when men's minds were excited with the idea of unity, the national party of Jassy called to town a

number of peasants of each department, who were to attend their assemblies and take an active part in the union business. One of the most democratically-minded boïars took charge of them, and was entrusted with the duty of explaining matters to them as clearly as was required by their slow, uneducated brains. In a smart speech he explained to them the righteousness of the union of the sister countries, and the need of it, and the good that would follow for all. At last he encouraged them to say whether they had understood and to ask again what was not clear to them. The more timid of them replied that no doubt the boïars knew best, as they were learned and in touch with what was going on in the world; as for themselves, what could they know, from the horns of their plough? but one of them, the cunning old Ion Roată, made bold to say that he had not understood. Of course, he went on, it was all right that the boïars should do what they liked without asking them, for they—the peasants—were able enough at handling the hoe, and the scythe, and the sickle, and all that, but the boïars could handle the pen, and make the white black, and the black white at will, for God had given them wisdom to guide the ignorant, and so on. No, asserted the boïar, the times were gone by when the boïars thought more of themselves than of the rest of mankind; now equality prevailed, and they ought all to have an equal share in the conduct as well as in the burdens of the land—and, again he went on in long explanations, after which he said he hoped the peasants understood what was expected from them. Old Ion Roată's mind has again been too slow for him. The boïar, however, does not get angry; he wants to show patience; he wishes to be clear and instructive.

"Well," says he, "Uncle John, do you see that big stone at the end of my garden? Will you please bring it to me here?"

The peasant goes but cannot lift the stone. A second peasant is sent along to help, then a third, a fourth—till they were able to lift the block on their shoulders and bring it before the boïar. There was the object lesson!

"Now, you see," said the boïar, brightening up, "none of you alone could lift that stone, but altogether you have overcome the difficulty. Union makes strength, and there exactly lies the point of our union with the other Roumanian country."

But again the queer old man has not understood! The boïar is at his wits' end, but does not lose his temper.

"Now, then," says he, "I really wonder how you have not understood, Uncle John, it is so very plain! However, will you just tell me, in your own way, what you have understood and what not? Let us hear."

"Well, sir, don't be displeased, but it seems to me that from speech to action there is a good long way. You, like any boïar, have commanded us to bring the stone, but you have not put your own shoulder along with us, as you were saying a moment since, that we should *all* have equal share in burdens and rights. From your stone I have understood that up to now we peasants have had each a separate stone to bear on our shoulders, but that henceforth we peasants all together, still only the peasants, will be called upon to bear on our shoulders a bigger stone; that is what I have understood!"

The John Roată type is a characteristic one among Roumanian peasantry.

But they brought about, none the less, the unity of the country; and the Roumanian peasants behaved most patriotically on that occasion, as has been duly acknowledged by the Congress of Paris itself; in the *Divanuri-ad-hoc*—assemblies elected to express the wish of the people as to unity—they put aside their own interests, which they had so much at heart, till other times, in order to get the momentous, the all-prevailing thing, unity.

In 1866 the Constitution of United Roumania was written; this Constitution clearly states in its 10th Article: "There exists no difference of classes whatever in Roumania." The principle of equality is there again, as it was in the old time; not written down then, but sanctified by custom; the principle of equality

prevailed again, and, although facts may still often clash with the principle, it stands there, nevertheless, like a pillar of light in the night of injustice, and a Roumanian may still reach and depend upon it, whatever obstacles may obstruct the way. By this Constitution there are no more boïars in the old sense, the very shadow of privilege has disappeared, and boïars and peasants are all equal citizens; they are the *Roumanian people.* But with all the equality there is none the less ample room for practical differences; there are the rich and the poor, the cultured and the ignorant, who in truth make a good deal of difference among men, so that the framework of society is, and probably ever will be, still a ladder, but again a well-trodden one. There will be always a leading class and a led one, an upper and a lower, and a rise from the latter to the former is always possible under conditions of capacity, education, and merit—all very fine, no doubt, if that were all, but there are other means of *arriving*, and the peasant tells you that too often—

"The pearl lies at the bottom of the sea,
Whilst the corpse floats on the surface," *

so that the fact of being higher or lower on the ladder does not mean much. But he is tolerant, when even the injustice is most obvious, for he says again—

"A forest without dry twigs is impossible." †

A practical difference of classes exists, then, and the man of the upper class is still called a boïar—the lady, the cucoana. The old jupîn and jupăneasa have long disappeared, and are only to be heard now and then in far-away places, where peasants will address each other by these appellations—such peasants being possibly descendants of some old rusticated boïars. For a long time these appellations have been confined to Jews,

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* "Mărgaritarul stă în fundul mării
Iar mortăciunea plutește pe de-asupra."

† "Pădure fără uscături nu se poate."

and probably through them have come to bear quite a scornful meaning, so that to-day even the poorest Jew feels offended if thus addressed, desiring to be called *domnule* (gentleman).

With the proclamation of equality the barbarous punishment of the rod was struck out of penal procedure, at the very zealous insistence of the boïars themselves, who, exactly on the principle of equality, felt that they might sometimes be liable to feel at the hands of some very unheeding official the rod's strokes on their own noble backs. The principle was again won, but bad habits are not so easily given up; the boïar was too much used to have his own way, and the recalcitrant peasant was often quickly brought by force to the boïar's residence *curte* (court), stretched in front of the staircase, and flogged till the blood came. Such things cannot easily be forgotten, and many a grandfather still lives to tell his staring grandchildren, sitting round the hearth on a winter night, all the sufferings he has seen or himself endured from the merciless boïar. Will not these children readily draw a simile between past and present? And often, if the present boïar does not behave quite as cruelly as of old, he is, nevertheless, the "hereditary foe," much inclined to treat him, the growing youth, as the wolf did the lamb of the fable.

That is why the peasant would rather have nothing to do with the boïar; he will never take domestic service if he can help it—anything is better than that:

> "Green leaf of garlic
> Than servant to the ciocoï
> Rather shepherd to the ewes
> With one's head on the mole-hill."*

That a gentleman should be loved by the peasants is a great exception; he must have won it by life-

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* "Frunză verde usturoi
Decît slugă la ciocoï
Mai bine cioban la oi
Cu capul pe mușinoi!"

long righteousness and goodness to them to have obliterated their hereditary distrust, an extremely difficult thing, as even the best proposal might take in their eyes the shape of a trap placed under their feet by the boïars. They expect to be always taken in, as their hereditary experience has taught them that they have always been "the eternally cheated."

If the feelings of the peasant for the country gentry are not very cordial those for the townspeople are not more so. In town lives the great bulk of the ruling class; the idea of the peasant is that the town people, at least as far as the gentry go, live at *his* expense. The difference in dress is for him the symbol of the inner difference; whilst the peasant has stuck to his national costume, the townsman has adopted the European cut—"German dress," as the people call it. The *surtucar* (from *surtuc* = redingote) is for the peasant something like the ciocoï, not so powerful, but just as hateful and contemptible, living at the peasant's expense. This belief has been enforced on his mind by the tremendous demand there is in towns for State offices, both among the rich and poor, and the struggle for them, which really forms the groundwork of political disputes and party politics—just as the struggles went on in the old times for titled functions! Moreover, the peasant, comparing his labour with the work of a town gentleman, is inclined to think that the gentleman is paid for doing nothing. In town also very often resides the master of the land (*moşie*) the peasants are living on; a proprietor who does not care a pin for land or peasants, who cares only for the income, brought in either by the working of the estate through a subordinate official, a *vekil*, or by letting the land to a stranger, a farmer who is very often a foreigner, mostly a Jew (in Moldavia, at least), and cares still less for land or people than the actual master does. To regulate the reciprocal relations of peasants and landowners or farmers, law has had to intervene more than once. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the successive Acts endeavouring to settle land as well as labour questions, had no other effect than to

lead to the rising of 1888, so that the next Parliament met with the set purpose of regulating the relations between peasant and large landowner, which even in the message from the throne were recognised as having been "iniquitous" and "unjust."

It was not, however, before 1893 that a new law was voted, a decided improvement on the preceding ones in its endeavour to put a stop, as far as possible, to the exploitation of the peasant by the large proprietor or farmer; the peasant was put more than ever before under the shield of the law as represented by magistrates, but how far these are accessible to the peasants is another question. Possibly this last law has done as much as law can do; but after all, laws are mere formulas, and the important point is their application, much more than their publication. As a matter of fact, the situation of the peasants is as yet far from being that of the Golden Age, and the peasant who has not sufficient land of his own to live on its produce, and is obliged to depend on paid labour, is still at the mercy of the landowner, or, what is worse, of an exploiting farmer, as the land proprietors more and more leave their lands in the hands of farmers who are strangers, to live more according to their taste in towns or even abroad.

As it is peasant and "gentleman" are not on the best of terms, save quite exceptionally; the peasant is full of distrust towards the gentleman—

> "With a gentleman's lie
> You can make the tour of Hungary." *

He expects to be always cheated and brought to ruin if the rich wishes it, for—

> "The wealth of the rich swallows the morsel of the poor." †

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* "Cu o minciună boierească
Încunjuri țara ungurească."

† "Averea bogatului înghite bucățica saracului."

He expects no mercy, no help from the rich, but—

> "Before inclination (to give) has come to the rich,
> The poor will have breathed his last."*

When his forbearance is at an end he will rise, as he has often done—to be put down just as easily; he will threaten—

> "The bad felly (of the wheel) also comes uppermost."†

On the whole it would seem that the peasant is turning a diplomatist after all, and, being so often taken advantage of, he will pay in similar coin when his opportunity comes. Here is an anecdote to illustrate the diplomatic relation between peasant and master. A gentleman wanted to try a peasant he had in his service to see if he meant to stay over the winter:

"'Look there, John, what is that?'

"'A cat, sir.'

"'No, look well, it is a bear.'

"'Oh, but it *is* a cat as much a cat can be, sir!'

"'It is no cat, John, it is a bear.'

"'But I am not blind, sir; I am quite sure it is a cat.'

"'Well, John, I perceive you are not an obedient servant, and I mean to dismiss you this autumn.'

"'Now, sir, you may be right after all, it is a bear!'"

In winter labour is low; John could not afford to lose his place.

In spring, when labour is dear, John has the best of it, and *he* wants to test his master. On seeing the very same cat on a house—

"'Oh, look sir, what a bear!'

"'Are you drunk, John? it is no bear, but a cat.'

"'It is a bear, sir; just look well.'

"'It is no bear at all.'

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* "Până-i vine gustul bogatului,
Îese sufletul saracului."

† "Vine și obada cea rĕ deasupra."

"'Well, sir, if you go on pronouncing me a fool I shall have to go away.'

"'Well I see it is a bear after all, but a small one!'"

IV

Among themselves the peasants have their own social distinctions, their foundation, too, being wealth. A *răzăsh* is looked up to if he has much land and is altogether well off; but if he has just a bit of land, as is often the case, he is looked down upon by the better sort of *clacash* (as the other peasants used to be called before getting land). A well-to-do peasant is addressed with *bade*—the woman with *lele*, and the endearing term *lelitza* for younger ones—which is nothing but a courteous appellation (as the Mr. for the upper classes), given even by the gentry to any peasant one wishes to be polite to. In truth, you cannot well address otherwise a peasant who is not your servant or subordinate, or whom you do not know very well—in which case you call him by his Christian name.

For the old the appellation of *moşule* (uncle) and *mătuşă* (aunt) are commonly used by peasant and gentry. They have also the *măi* for a man and *fa* for a female—rude appellations, but frequently used among equals, especially the young on intimate terms; also to inferiors; but, coming from a superior, a gentleman, they are resented as grave offences.

The social distinctions among peasants come especially to the front on the occasion of weddings, christenings, social gatherings in general, where the rich are expected to be open-handed but keep the head of the table. The poor peasant feels rather at a disadvantage opposite his rich neighbour; he thinks him endowed with peculiar luck.

"Even the oxen of the poor don't draw."*

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* "Saracului nici boii nu-i trag."

and,

"With the poor, even his pipe does not burn;"*

whilst on the contrary,

"For the rich, even the devil rocks his children."†

That is why he thinks it very wise not to have quarrels with the rich:—

"With the rich, neither try your horse nor measure your purse."‡

Not that he thinks very much of wealth, for—

"The highest riches
Are like the mountain stream:
To-day it flows and floods,
To-morrow it diminishes and dries."§

And wealth dishonestly won is sure ruin of the soul, for—

"Of rightly-earned money, the devil still takes half; as for the wrongly-earned, he will take it and its master withal."‖

Neither does it seem very easy to overcome poverty, as—

"Wealth is only a hurdle, poverty is a stone wall."¶

The Roumanian peasant does not look down upon those poorer than himself, but will become satirical with a poor

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* "Omului sarac nici luleaua nu-i arde."

† "Omului bogat, și dracu-i leagănă copiii."

‡ "Cu bogatul, nici calul să-ți încerci nici punga să-ți măsori."

§ "Averile de frunte
Sînt ca un isvor de munte:
Astă-zi curge și îneacă
Mîne scade ș'apoi sacă."

‖ "Din banii drepți iea dracu pe jumatate, iar pe cei strâmbi îi iea cu stăpân cu tot."

¶ "Averea-i gard de nuele, saracica-i zid de piatră."

but proud person, especially if the latter would pass for a gentleman :—

> "*Mister*, holding an ox by a rope; if you had two,
> I would call you master!" *

will he address him. Often he will humour his own poverty :—

> "Of poverty I think little
> She sits at home under the bed,
> She has laid and now is brooding,
> God helping, she will increase." †

V

Types.

With regard to their physical appearance, the Roumanians, although very varied, like any other people, have still in their looks and bearing something quite their own. From the historical point of view, three types seem to be conspicuous, observable in the Carpathian region: A *Roman* type, in the south-western parts, namely, in the Oltenia, the Banat, and the south-west of Transylvania—the very ground of the old Roman colonisation—a type very much like the Italian type. In the north and north-east of Transylvania, in the Bukovina and the western mountains of Moldavia, a *Dacian* type predominates. Down in the plains, east and southward, the *Slav* type is apparent, mixed to a large extent with both the former types.

In general, as groundlines whereby the Roumanian type may be recognised, we may put down: Slender figure, rather long trunk as compared to the length of the legs;

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* "*Domnule*, cu un bou de funie;
să fii cu doi ţi-as zice *bade!*"

† "De săracie nu-mi pasă
Că şade sub-pat acasă
A ouat ş'acum clocește
De-o vrea Dumnezeu sporește."

well-cut profile—whatever the complexion; rather small, deep-set eyes, of all colours; all shades of hair, always lighter in beard and moustache than on the head. Besides, a Roumanian peasant seldom wears a beard; this is the case with old men only, who are very anxious indeed to preserve, as they say, this symbol of their respectability and honour. The young men all shave, but all wear moustachios, and never would dream of cutting them. A man with an entirely clean-shaven face is very distasteful to them; a *spin* (a beardless, moustacheless man) is looked upon as of very doubtful character; and so is a *red-haired* man. In popular tales both are set down as peculiar beings, sure to work mischief wherever they come.

As to women, their appearance is not quite that of the men in the various regions. As a rule they have rather round than long faces; well-defined profiles, but not as sharply cut as men's; small bones and delicate frames. Slender, too: a fat peasant woman is quite a rare sight; they are generally thin and delicate, with small hands and small feet, even in the regions where labour is hard; they have thin lips, full shoulders, but bosoms only slightly developed.

Now I imagine one is not expected to speak of women without hinting at beauty. As far as their looks go, Roumanian peasant women are recognised as the fairest among their neighbours by all the nations living round them, and by all foreign travellers who have seen them. German writers seem not to find appreciative epithets enough to describe the Roumanian (popular) fair sex: "interesting apparitions," "charming beings," "ensnaring, seductive women and girls"; attractive is the least they appear to be able to say of them. One of them says: "Among few peoples can one observe so strikingly many, if not handsome, at least pleasant and pretty women as among the Roumanians." And a Russian writer, speaking about Bassarabia, says of the peasant women: "The brilliant dark eyes of the Moldavian woman, her graceful movements, now slow and indolent, now passionate, make of her a very charming being."

Now, apart from foreign enthusiasm and kindliness, we may fairly agree that the Roumanian peasant woman is freely gifted with natural beauty, most apparent where she is in the condition to preserve it, and this is true of men also. Where nature has been more generous, and men and women can live more in the shade, and work less hard, their physical appearance will be at its best—this is usually the case in mountainous districts. But the scorching sun and blasting winds of the plain, the hard, endless labour and bad food, and much toil, and little joy? . . . these are surely not conditions to make one beautiful.

But what is really important about the Roumanian's appearance, and striking, according to foreign travellers' reports, is that he *has* an expression; there is always something characteristic in his face. Bad or good as his character may be, you see it there in his looks; there is a soul alive under that mask of flesh. And, if there are extremes of character, as it is, for instance, said of the *Motz* (dweller of the south-western Transylvania) that he is stern, severe, inspiring fear, and of the *Oltean* (in the west of Valachia) that he is bright, lively, and talkative, it is none the less true that the groundwork of the Roumanian character is quietness, seriousness, assurance and steadiness, and these are manifest in his looks. Tenacious, steadfast, stubborn, and above all, long-enduring, the Roumanian peasant goes on patiently, through his many troubles and scanty joys; he knows that life is not play; he knows that it is hard to get on, but that perseverance will carry one through. But the virtues have their own vices: too much endurance may be wrong after all; fortitude becomes inertness, patience becomes apathy. The Roumanian, at least the Moldavian, peasant himself acknowledges this defect in his character, of thinking too much before acting, in the modest proverb:—

"Give me, O God, the Moldavian's wisdom last."*

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* "Dă-mi, Doamne, mintea Moldovanului cea de pe urmă."

South of the Danube, according to Dr. Weigand's descriptions, there seem to be two fundamental types of Roumanians or Armîni. One type, in the north, of fair complexion; the other in the south, dark, fairly representative, he says, of the old Roman legionary. These two types present a good many variations. As compared with their neighbours, they are not as tall as the Albanians, but taller than the Bulgarians; in opposition to the Bulgarian's round face, the Armîn strikes one by his long-shaped face, still more striking in women. Blue-eyed Armîni are rare, still rarer red-haired ones; their eyes are always deep-set. The Armîn has not the dull, stupid expression of the Slav peasant; he is judicious, decided, bold, and considerate at the same time, but also sly and crafty. The women are small and delicate, with small bosoms, long, oval face, and mild expression.

This general type of the Roumanian peasant, at large, seems, not unnaturally, to be to his taste; what he likes in a figure, is its being tall and slender: "Tall and slender, as if drawn through a finger ring," what makes the beauty in a face, are eyes and eyebrows:—

"For eyes like the blackberries
I ramble round the woods,
For meeting eye-brows
I walk over half the country
And through a third of Moldavia;
For eyes like the holy sun
I roam aimlessly at night." *

Costumes.

The Roumanian nation has her costume handed down from generation to generation, well preserved in the mountains, but not quite so well in the plains, especially

* "Pentru ochi ca murele
Ocolesc pădurile
Pentru sprincene 'nchinate
Umblu ţara jumatate
Şi Moldov'a treia parte;
Pentru ochi ca sfîntul soare
Umblu noaptea pe răzoare."

in the immediate neighbourhood of towns. The dress of the men is much more uniform than that of the women, and also plainer and easier to describe. The fundamental, characteristic feature of it, is the colour, always white. These garments are: (*a*) trousers, of woollen or hemp tissue, of various cuts, the most characteristic of them being the so-called *itzari*, very long tight trousers, something like twice the length of the leg, but then gathered up in thin folds all along the leg to which they tightly fit. (*b*) The shirt, of flax, hemp, cotton, or even rough silk white tissue, hanging tunic-like over the trousers, fastened at the waist with a broad, long red woollen sash called *brîu*, or by a leather belt. (*c*) In the way of coats, the Roumanian peasant has a great variety of garments, and with extremely varied names, the most common being the *suman* of brown woollen tissue, and the *cojoc* or sheepskin. (*d*) As headgear the Roumanian peasant wears the *căciula*, a lambskin cap, usually black, of which a curious variety is the *căciula țurcanească*, long, perhaps thrice the ordinary size, worn with the top hanging on one side. Hats are also worn, in summer, but only black, strong felt, large brimmed hats, trimmed round the top with ribbons and pearls. (*e*) For the feet they have the *opinci*, sandals, of cattle or pig's hide, shoes and boots. Truly speaking, the sandal, the *opinca*, belongs to the mountain, being very elastic and convenient for climbing; in the plain it is only used as being a light and cheap footgear. The boots are the footgear *par excellence*; and they must have high, strong heels too. The heel is very important for the dance on a Sunday, to beat the ground furiously with—

"Be the sandal ever so good,
Like the boot it cannot sound;
And the upper-leathered boot*

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*"Fie ochinca cît de bună
Ca ciubota nu mai sună;
Și ciubota căputată

Were good if it were not holed:
But on the sandal, the poor one,
I put a clout
To the dance I go
And I still shout once, hop!"*

The women's dress is still more varied and elaborate. Roughly speaking, it is composed of a shift, reaching to the ankle, with embroideries on all the upper part, with coloured cotton, chiefly red and black; and of a *catrinţa*, a petticoat, in its way, which is of as many varieties as are the valleys between the mountains, or rather the mountain rivers, for the *catrintza* belongs to the mountain, in the plain they wear skirts. Coats they wear similar to those of the men—often the same: for the feet they have shoes; they wear sometimes, in bad weather, their husbands' boots, but, as a rule, they go barefooted. On the head they wear the *ştergar*, a kind of veil, of cotton tissue with silk stripes, or of silk with cotton designs.

The important feature about the costume, is that it is entirely home made, and all women's industry. But if the national costume is still very well preserved in the mountains, it is not so in the plains. Here, field-labour, making so great a demand on available arms, women cannot be spared to spin and weave, to grow hemp and flax, and attend to silkworms; moreover they find ready stuffs in the towns, which, although not wearing half so well as the homespun, are nevertheless much cheaper; more than that, clothing and under-clothing are becoming more and more easy to be had in towns. The peasant sees at the "Jew's shop" shirts and garments hanging up, which, although not exactly the cut he is used to, are nevertheless nearly so; he buys them, puts them on—and so national costume is dying out little by little, taking in the long run some

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* Bună ar fi cînd n'ar fi spartă.
Dar ochinca saraca
Îi pui potlog
Mă duc la joc
Si tot strig o dată, hop!"

other appearance, but never the cut of the town garment, for which he still feels a natural aversion.

With the Valachs of the Pindus, the costume has still some fundamental features common with that of the Carpathian. Here also, the national costume is preserved in the mountains, consequently by the shepherds, constituting as we know the bulk of the Armîn population, whilst the Armîni of the plain—merchants, tradesmen, workmen—have adopted the costume of the surrounding peoples. This costume, with slight differences, is pretty similar to that of the Carpathian region. In the regions of the Pindus also, the cheap wares are bought in town, and take the place of the otherwise entirely home-made garments.

The Armîn, like the Roumanian, is just as keen as he can afford to be about a good garment. Not that a Roumanian peasant thinks over much of dress :—

"It is not by the cloak one judges a man." *

But a careful dress is a good introduction :—

"The worth of a man is recognisable by his dress." †

And then among young folks, dress is a great compliment to beauty. Scorched by the sun, with her hair smoothed, limp and tightly plaited on the head, the girl will cover herself with no end of strings, and pins, and flowers, and necklaces of beads and coins for the Sunday dance, looking almost ridiculous, if she did not look so candidly happy and innocent. But after all, taste is quite an individual matter, and the Roumanian peasants well agree that—

"He is not handsome who believes himself so,
But handsome is who has good looks; ‡

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* "Nu după cojoc se judecă omul."

† "Vrednicia omului se cunoaşte după port."

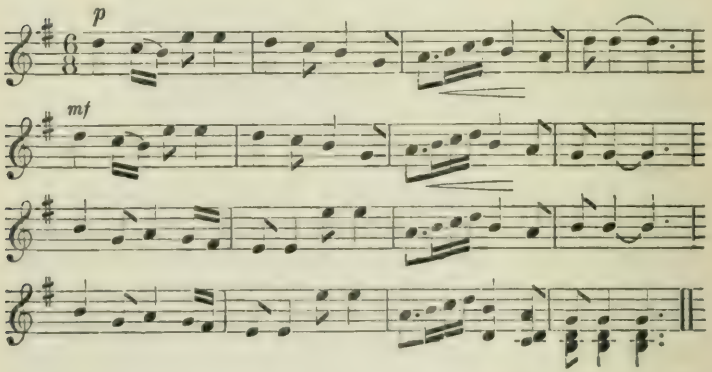
‡ "Nu-i frumos cine se ţine
Ci-i frumos cui îi stă bine;

He is not handsome who adorns himself
But he is so, when his garb is becoming." *

The Roumanian peasant highly appreciates cleanliness in dress. No more important a thing than a dirty shirt seems to have inspired following song :—

"Little blade of black grass,
Dear, O little dear, dear,
Why do you wear your shirt dirty?
Dear, O little dear, dear,
I wear it so as I like it,
Dear, O little dear, dear,
For my beloved is ill,
Dear, O little dear, dear,†

sung on the following sweet melody :—



* Nu-i frumos cin'-i se igăteşte
Ci e cui se potriveşte."

† "Firişor de iarbă neagră
Dragă, drăguliţă dragă,
De ce porţi cămeşa neagră?
Dragă, drăguliţă dragă,
Ia o port c' aşa mi-i dragă
Dragă, draguliţă dragă,
Că mi-i iubita bolnavă
Dragă, drăguliţă dragă,

And she suffers in her hand,
Dear, O little dear, dear,
She has not washed for a month,
Dear, O little dear, dear.
Let me then wash it for you,
Dear, O little dear, dear,
With water from yonder stream,
Dear, O little dear, dear." *

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* Și-i bolnavă zeu de-o mână
Dragă, drăguliță dragă,
N'a spalat cămeși de-o lună
Dragă, drăguliță dragă.
Dă-o 'ncoace s'o spăl eu
Dragă, drăguliță, dragă,
Cu apă de la părău
Dragă, drăguliță, dragă."

CHAPTER III

THE PEASANT AND THE STATE

I

Of the whole Roumanian nation, spread and scattered about from Carpathian to Pindus, hardly one half live under a Government of their own; the other half, in smaller or larger portions, are subjected to seven various foreign States, all differing in organisation and institutions. To enter into details here would be impossible, and our only aim is to treat the question generally, or in principle, so to speak; to sketch out the duties and rights of peasants in the State, and to indicate the feelings aroused in them by those duties and rights. No doubt (as in the preceding chapters) the interest must centre in Free Roumania, on the eastern and southern slopes of the Carpathians, where the Roumanians have succeeded in building up a State of their own, a *home* of their own.

To the peasant's mind a State is personified more or less in the person of the monarch; whatever he is called upon to do for his State he considers it to be done for the *Domnitoriu*, the "prince" or "ruler,"—the appellation of *Rege* (King), of little more than twenty years' standing, is rather slow in entering thoroughly into the peasant's vocabulary. For a long time past, Moldavia and Valachia have been under the absolute rule of an absolute voyevode, or *Domn*, or *Domnitor*, briefly called only *vodă;* no wonder that the notion should have taken such hold of people's imagination. For those under foreign rule, surely not Austro-Hungary,

still less Russia, was meant to unteach the old lesson; the *Împaratul*, the Emperor, unmistakably represents the State in those regions—it is useless to discuss Turkey, although, as far as it goes, the idea of State or Government could hardly be anywhere looser than in Turkey. His duties towards the State the peasant thus considers as duties towards the monarch, and these are, as of old, military service and taxation.

"He who devised soldiery
May the wilderness eat his flesh,
And poverty his own children,
The crows may eat up his bones,
Upon all the fields." *

The first duty of a peasant—as well as of a townsman—when he comes of age, is to "draw lots" to become a soldier, to take upon himself the duty of defending the country, of being ready to give, at any moment, blood and life for it. As far as love of land goes, and readiness to strike and receive blows in the defence of land, history is there to bear witness that the Roumanian has ever been a patriot and a brave man. As for the warlike, fighting spirit, the Roumanian has never been bloodthirsty; without desire of conquests, the Roumanian has always been anxious to protect his own abode, leaving alone that of others; invasions and plunder have never been in his line, except now and then as reprisals. Conquests the Roumanians have never made, except of each other, when Stephen the Great, Voyevode of Moldavia, conquered a portion of Valachia, and pushed his boundary to the Milcov—but this should be called an early step toward union rather than conquest.

Looking back over history we find the Roumanians to have been thorough soldiers at the times of *Mircea*

* "Cine-a stârnit cătănia
Mânca-i-ar carnea pustia
Și copiii sărăcia
Cioarele ciolanele
Pe toate ogoarele."

(Valachia), and Stephen (Moldavia), both "great," both military geniuses perhaps, but, after all, the victories they won were not won with their heads alone, but with the ready arms of their subjects. And they had arms ready enough, those subjects, and wanted no special training and hardly any calling out to run to the frontier to defend the fatherland. In those times the peasants were free, and had, moreover, their own properties, and the defence of the *patria* was not a mere abstract notion, but a very positive concrete one; the *patria* or *moşia* was nothing else than the aggregate of all the minor individual *moşii* (lands, estates); everybody defending the whole was conscious of defending his own small piece. No training, no provisions, no weapons, the monarch had to provide for nothing, but just call out the people to meet him—the boïars and the yeomen on horseback, the landless peasants on foot. The soldiers had to provide for their own clothing, their armament, their food. Mounted on their nags, on wooden saddles with oaken stirrups, with wheaten bread and a *burduf* (the skin or stomach of a sheep) of cheese in the bag hanging at the saddle's bow, on they rushed; strong, and daring, and heedless, armed only with the primitive bow, the battle-axe, the lance, and in most cases only with the national *ghioaga* (club), they were indomitable on the battlefield, those simple, common people, just freshly come from the plough. The Polish writers of those times might well admire such genuine braves, and they did it, too, over and over again. "Dreaded men, and very brave, and there is hardly on the surface of the earth another people, who for warlike glory and by heroism were able to defend a smaller country against a larger number of foes, attacking and repelling them repeatedly"—that is the general tone with regard to Roumanian soldiery.

But we know what the economic and social relations came to in the long run: with the coming down of the peasantry, down comes also patriotism and bravery. The subjected peasant has henceforth to work for the boïar; this latter does not want to waste his "working

powers" on battlefields, and the peasant can afford to go to war no more. Peasants are left out of the armies, which begin to be composed only of mercenaries, who formerly were to be met with in the Roumanian armies only accidentally, and only in small numbers. Michael the Brave had only mercenaries: he fell—with all the estates he had heaped on his boïars, they deserted him at the critical moment!

The mercenaries were, no doubt, largely Roumanians, the peasants who still remained free, and runaway serfs; Roumanians still, but the spirit had changed; they fought for money, they had no interest whatever in the war, which is the monarch's own affair; the only interest was to escape safe and sound, and possibly to strive for some reward at the end, and to do the enemy as much harm as possible, in order to plunder him—poor incentives as compared with those of the good old times of liberty!

With the installation of the Phanariote rulers, wars are entirely dropped, armies are of no avail; the Roumanians may as well forget to fight—the haïdook alone keeps alive the memory of it. The princes want no more armies; the only thing they want is a body-guard, and this they make up of strong vagrants from beyond the Danube, especially Albanians, who under the name of Arnâutzi, in their special uniform with the white *fustanella*, and a belt full of pistols, armed to the teeth, were in charge of the prince's person and wealth. There was no longer a national army in either principality; and yet this is the period of the greatest Russo-Turkish wars, and it appears that the Russian armies were pretty well furnished with Roumanian volunteers or mercenaries, gladly going to fight the pagan oppressor. Moreover, there are documents such as the letters of the King of Poland, August II., to his celebrated son Maurice of Saxony, proving that Roumanians served in foreign armies, Polish and Swedish, as light cavalry, "very successfully," as the King writes, praising also the Roumanian horses.

With the overthrow of Phanariotic rule and the revival of national spirit, national armies began little by little

to be organised, reaching a remarkable development under the present reign; and in the last war of independence the Roumanians were able to prove, under the guidance of their warlike prince (now king), Charles I., that the ancestral bravery was not dead, and the spirit of Great Stephen and Brave Michael seemed to be hovering above them still.

The Roumanian *can* fight, and no mistake, and he certainly does not fear fire, but as to having any particular liking for it, I am glad to say, he has not; he much prefers a quiet, peaceful life, and what he says of the gipsy may fit himself just as well. Thus a gipsy soldier was told that he had to go to war to fight the Turks or some other enemies: "Well, why should I fight them? I have no quarrel with them!" That is exactly it: the soldier has to fight without being clearly satisfied as to the why. A soldier is an instrument, supposed to be always ready for action, without right of inquiry as to the right or the wrong of it. To discipline a soldier to that extent takes time. The necessity of the training, the transition from the old, absolute liberty and goodwill service to the enforced barrack life, with the wear and tear of years of long training, have told heavily upon Roumanian spirit, and have largely contributed to make the army a terror to the Roumanian peasant. And if he does not dislike the army in itself, what he deeply dislikes is exactly that training, that barrack life, which takes him for years away from his field, his flocks, his cottage; this it is which is almost unbearable to him, and he will do all he possibly can to avoid it.

We may be fairly sure that barrack life is not apt to leave room for brilliant illusions in any country, still less in Eastern Europe, where civilisation as a whole, and the education of the upper classes in particular, is very often a rather misty, tottering affair, just good enough to give those who have it an elated, shallow idea of their own personal value, and not many right, Christian ideas about anything else. And persons of this kind are entrusted with the care of men! It is an open secret that the

soldiers as a rule are far from being happy in the barracks, but it is a blessing when it can be stated that they are, at least, fairly treated, something like human beings! Corporal punishment, although prohibited by law, was still the most widespread punishment applied to soldiers in training. But since these lines were written a royal decree, an order of the day, issued on the occasion of the twenty-fifth commemoration of the proclamation of Independence, enforced the entire suppression of corporal punishment in the army. The soldiers have made a talisman of that decree; they wear it on their breasts; and the knowledge of it will penetrate into the peasant's hut, and work, no doubt, on the people's minds, and besides the surname of "the wise," that seems likely to be added to the monarch's name in more cultivated circles, that of "the good" will perhaps be given by the grateful hearts of his humbler subjects. That the "discipline" should not go to wreck, it is the business of the upper ranks in the army to devise some civilised and civilising means.

Of course there are exceptions: there are humane and able officers, with some comprehension of human nature, who deal with their soldiers accordingly, but I am afraid these are not as many as they should be. Many officers, on the contrary, by their own behaviour, and that of those subordinates they think proper to push on to advancement, are a vivid illustration of the truth that bad education is worse than no education at all. I am not going to enter into the discussion of barrack education, although I cannot say that I am an admirer of it, yet I allow that with all its unavoidable drawbacks it might give good results in the way of spreading civilisation, and as a healthy physical training; but, then, the selection of the ranks above the mere soldier should be much more carefully made than it is now. As things are, the young peasant of sufficient age is very much inclined to look upon barrack life as a martyrdom, and that is why, when he draws lots and is found good, he will cry and his mother with him, and his friends lament over him as if he were dead.

"Green leaf of chervil,
We poor young lads,
How they gather us from vales,
With the mayors and constables,
And they drive us like oxen,
And shear us just like sheep,
And mingle our hair with the rubbish!
And green leaf of wild thyme,
My hair of a soft yellow
Under the feet of the major,
My beautiful curly hair,
Mother, you will see no more." *

So many feelings are hurt in him; he is treated like an ox or a sheep in a flock; he has his hair shorn close, which he likes to wear in a rather long crop, with a fringe in front. A peasant is very anxious never to throw his hair away in the rubbish; he takes it carefully when cut, and buries it at the root of some tree. The drawing of the lots is still more heartrending when the young man is already married, as is often the case.

"Green leaf of mellilot
For a rifle all rusty
I left house, I left table,
I left behind a fair wife †

---

* "Frunză verde baraboi,
Sarmanii de noi flăcăi,
Cum ne strânge de pe văi,
Cu primari, cu vătăjei,
Și ne mînă ca pe boi,
Și ne tunde ca pe oi
Și ne dă păru'n gunoi.
Ș'apoi frunză cimbrișor
Părul meu cel gălbior
Sub picioare la maior
Părul meu cel mândru, creț,
Mămucă, n' ai să-l mai vezi!"

† "Frunză verde de sulcină
Pentru o pușcă de rugină
Lăsăi casă, lăsăi masă
Lăsăi nevastă frumoasă

With two babies in her arms
Who are crying: father, father!" *

The soldier in the barracks is ever pining after his home; he cannot forget all he has left behind, the life of his life, all that which he grieves to think will come to harm in his absence.

"Only leaf of hazel-nut
He who will take the rifle in hand
Will milk no more ewes in the fold;
His wooden pails will mildew,
His scythe will rust in the loft,
His house will be deserted,
His fields will all be fallow,
His mother will become old,
His beloved become insane
His children perish on the road!" †

The young recruit is no doubt rather awkward when he comes from his village or his sheepfold; he is bewildered by all the new things he has never seen before, by the ways and manners he has not been used to; kind feeling and humane behaviour towards him would surely have a much more improving influence than harsh treatment, which, however, is generally considered so much manlier and more fit for the rough peasant. But roughness is not exactly the characteristic of the Roumanian peasant, neither is it a feature of the Roumanian soldier; quite the reverse, as far as my experience goes in this respect—and it is wide enough—in streets or on roads,

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* Cu doi copilaşi pe braţe
Care strîgă: tată, tată!"

† "Numai frunză ş'o alună
Cine-a luat arma 'n mână
N'a mai mulge oi la stână;
Găleata i-a mucezī,
Coasa 'n pod i-a rugini,
Casa i s'a pustii,
Ogoru i-a 'nţeleni,
Măicuţa i-a 'mbătrini
Puicuţa i-a 'nebuni
Copii pe drum i-or peri!"

in villages or open fields, the private can easily be cited as a model of civility and decency to many an officer; but I know of instances of great impertinence of sergeants, who seem to be the very *cïocoï* (the parvenus of the army), raised, it seems, above their companions much more by reason of the blows they have administered to their "men" than by virtue of their own merit. Mostly also, they are towns-people. Beyond the sergeant there is no promotion, except through a special course of study. The education of the officers is given in special schools from the very beginning.

If the training of the soldiers has its drawbacks, a greater drawback is when they get no training at all, or hardly any, and that is the case with those who are given out as domestic servants, as "orderlies," to the officers, where they get a training of humiliation and domesticity, instead of the training of defenders of the fatherland. It is quite true, that personally, soldiers are sometimes better off in that condition than at the barracks, but that again is only the exception, and a rare exception. In most cases, what sort of work has not the poor defender of his country to do, and what becomes of his character, and of the patriotic ideals he is expected to develop? And bad as the manners of the officer, his master, are towards him, those of his mistress are very often ten times worse. "Well," you may hear them say, "the *Domnul* might have been good enough in his way, but the *Duduka* (the lady) was dreadful!" Surely, if the soldier finds sometimes in the house of his officer an elevating, moral atmosphere (as he sometimes indeed does), as a rule, and not in the worst cases, he is in a degrading atmosphere, being either a man-of-all-work, or else like the hard labouring ass in the yard. Besides, domestic service has never been in favour with the Roumanian peasant.

Unpleasant as the barrack life may be for the peasant, it is none the less true that some good points may be found in it. There are peasants who come home from the army really improved, with a knowledge of reading and writing acquired in the barracks, and with a large

knowledge of other things, of which he has much to say. The soldier has gone about a good deal, he learns to know his country, and when he comes back he is looked upon as a world-traveller, and is eagerly questioned and listened to, when he tells about places and things he has seen; and how proud and wise he looks in the eyes of the bewildered audience when he is able to say that "he has been as far as Bucharest," and that "he has himself kept watch on the *Domnitor* himself!"

The fact is, in places where soldiers returned from military service have brought with them the idea that the army is not bad, that officers are humane, and the service not too hard, the feeling for the army and military service is well on the way to taking a good turn. It is in the very nature of children and youths to like the army and soldiers! Their animal spirits incline them to say: "Surely, we shall go to the army, for if we did not, who will? the old?" And their emotions are also kindled by war stories, told by those who have come back from the last war, which are very inspiriting to youth, and they look forward, gladly fighting "the Turk," the traditional Turk; and greatly puzzled they are to hear that politics have changed, and that the Turk has to be looked upon henceforth as a friend. And humour enters sometimes into the matter, as witness the following anecdote.

In the last war, it is known that one of the regiments which particularly distinguished itself by dash and daring, and also by heavy loss of life, was the 13th Regiment of the *Dorobantzi*, known also under the nickname of *curcani* (turkey-cocks), because of that bird's feather adorning their black *căciula*. Now, the anecdote tells us, the Sultan, hearing of all the havoc done among his own troops by these dreadful *curcani*, was very anxious to have one brought to him that he might see what they were like. But catching a *curcan* was just as difficult as catching the mountain eagle, his attendants said, and all they could do, was to bring to the Sultan the garments of such a *curcan*. As the Sultan sat on his divan, the servants stretched on the floor in front of him, the long trousers, the *itzari*—those worn gathered up the leg, and

at least twice its length— ; from the belt upwards, they stretched the supposed coat, in this particular case a cloak, coming down below the knee. On top of it, they put the long bonnet, the *căciula turcănească*, and at the bottom of the trousers, the top-boots. At sight of such a size, the amazed Sultan only sighed heavily, and said that of course, against such giants, what could his poor soldiers do. Later on, an officer came to announce to the Sultan, that a *curcan* had been caught at last, and would be brought before His Majesty. And, as the Sultan sat there, with his elbow leaning on pillows, with his coffee by him and his *tchibouk* between his lips, the brave, fearless *curcan* advanced with his body leaning forward, stepping steadily and heavily as his wont was—according to the training of that time—and, arrived in front of the Sultan, he stretched himself full length, and, with the hand to his cockade, he shouted loudly: "*Să trăiţi*" ("May you live!")* The bewildered Sultan fell on his back, shrieking desperately: "Help, help, the turkey-cock is eating me up!"

In verse, also, the Roumanian soldier has not forgotten to celebrate the war for independence; not much has been collected to my knowledge, but this one I am able to give:—

"Little leaf of sand-cudweed!
Every town has its luck,
Plevna alone is ablaze
With Osman Pasha in its middle!
The Pasha cries out aloud:
Come on, Turks, come on quickly †

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* "May you live!" is the salute used by soldiers when speaking to superiors.

† "Frunzuliţă siminoc!
Tot oraşu-i cu noroc,
Numai Plevna arde 'n foc
Cu Osman Paşa la mijloc;
Strigă Paşa 'n gura mare:
Săriţi Turci, săriţi mai tare,

For Charles has arrived down
Like the Sun when he rises,
With great number of army
Dressed up in oil-cloth,
Firing and bombarding
And asking after Osman,
With "*Curcani*" and "*Dorobantzi*"
Who wither you to the liver
They cut us down and kill us
That not one will leave this land.
. . . . . .
From Plevna to Rustchiouk
Nothing but heads of Turks;
From Plevna to Vidin
Thousands and thousands of Roumanians pass."*

II

"The peasant brings abundance in time
of peace, and glory in time of war."
(Prince N. Bibescu.)†

The second duty of a citizen towards the State, is to pay taxes. In Free Roumania, the yearly taxation of a landless peasant is something like fifteen

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* C 'a sosit Carol în vale
Ca soarele cînd răsare,
Cu oştire sumă mare
Imbracată 'n muşamale,
Impuşcând şi bombardând
Şi de Osman întrebând;
Cu curcani şi dorobanţi,
Ce te sacă la ficaţi;
Ei ne taie, ne omoară,
De nu mai ieşim din ţară
. . . . . .
De la Plevna la Rusciuc
Numai capete de Turc;
De la Plevna păn'la Dii
Trec Românii mii şi mii."

† "Ţaranul aduce belşug în timp de pace şi glorie în timp de războiu."
(Prinţul N. Bibescu.—Discurs parlamentar, Feb. 1889.)

shillings, a little below twenty francs a year. This is the taxation of a townsman as well, and this is the taxation of *any* man without property. He may have an income, he may have any amount of cash at the banker's, no man in Roumania pays a farthing more than the poorest of peasants. The taxes cannot really be called heavy; it is their unfairness that is their drawback. And as far as I have been able to gather, this is the drawback to taxation generally, all over the continent, for no country, I believe, except England, has the income-tax. But there is a talk of income-tax in Roumania, and may be its realisation is not half as far off as it seems to be.

Those who own land pay much heavier taxes, according to quantity, to quality, to the situation of the land, and to the act by which they received it. To give figures, even approximately, would mean nothing; suffice it to say, that taxation does not appear particularly heavy, perhaps not heavy at all, in fortunate years and with good harvests; but then the prospect changes altogether when the years are bad, and unfortunately this is not seldom the case. There come bad years, and there come *very* bad years, and then the peasant—as well as the gentleman, for the matter of that—does not take out the value of the seed he has put into the soil; where is he then to get any profit at all to pay taxes? And there come misfortunes, deaths and such like; and there come happy events like weddings, christenings, &c., and money is wanted, and the expense cannot be put off, and the peasant borrows. In the best case, he will greatly undersell his labour for the next summer to his landlord, or to a farmer, but often he will borrow from usurers, who are never lacking in any corner of the world, and it has been calculated that there are places where peasants pay up to 200 per cent. interest to usurers! Surely in such cases, times are hard with good or bad harvests. Of course, one is always inclined to say, the peasant might be more thrifty; and spend less, or else be provident, and save when he can towards the possible time when he may be in need. Yes, thrift is a beautiful word; the

Roumanian peasant has put it into a formula of his own :—

"Save white money for black days"*

But that is mere theory. The practice is, that the average Roumanian is not thrifty, or provident, by nature. He seems to have an innate contempt for money, which he is very apt to spend by anticipation ; there is a need of freehandedness, of living ostentatiously, about the Roumanian, which rather attests a noble, "boïarly" nature. But it is a drawback too, no doubt ; a drawback that may be improved in time, by education, by example from above, but up to now, it is true that if the Roumanian peasant may be accounted a patient, uncomplaining being, he cannot boast of being a prudent one. And past history can easily explain this state of things. It is only the present generation that has not been plundered by the hands of Greek or Turk ; before, it was absolutely useless to save, for the savings were sure to be for the benefit of others ; it seemed better to have nothing. In the present day, there is a general feeling, repeatedly expressed even in Parliament, that taxation as a whole is far from being as fairly distributed as it should be, and that it falls far heavier on those who have little than on those who have much ; in other words, the rich are taxed too little, and the poor too much. This, as far as I have been able to gather, is the general state of things with all the Roumanian people at large. Income-tax may do much to improve it.

III

With military service and payment of taxes, the peasant has done his duty towards the State, roughly speaking. In return he is entitled to all sorts of paternal care : administration, justice, the Church, medical assistance, school ; all these he receives direct from the State, in the free kingdom. And, first and foremost ; he contributes to the formation of the Government itself, which contribution is his duty and privilege as well.

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* "Strânge bani albi pentru zile negre."

Thus, every peasant who has come of age, who pays the smallest tax (that is, who is not a pauper), and who is not a domestic servant, has the right to give his vote at the elections for the Chamber of the Deputies —not for the Senate. They vote for the third College. Those who pay a tax of upwards of 300 frs. a year, or can read and write, are entitled to a direct vote; the others only vote by delegacy; a delegate for every fifty peasants. So far, so good: the peasants are represented in the legislative bodies, they take part in the making of their own laws. But that is a mere figure of speech. In fact, one may well ask how far a Parliament is a true representation of a nation even in Western, civilised countries, let alone a small Eastern country, with a Parliament not half a century old! Political habits are slow to take root, and those who know what elections and representation mean in old and large countries, may easily imagine what they may be in a country with so young a political education and habits. Truly, elections mean very little—if anything—beyond administrative business. The peasant does not care for politics; what he wants is to be treated fairly, to have justice done to him, and he is content if he gets that. If told that elections *are* a means to provide that for him, well then, he votes. Peasants hardly ever care about the representative they elect; as a rule he is a person imposed on them, a person whom they hardly ever know or are interested in, or have any trust in. Of late there has been a talk about universal suffrage, but it is argued that the country is not ripe for it, and I dare say it is not; it has been argued, too, that the electors would not be conscious of their votes, but it seems to me this argument can hardly stand in face of the question: Are at least half of the present voters—town and country—conscious of their votes? Moreover, are the representatives themselves all conscious of their mandate? Until these questions have been fairly answered, universal suffrage may have its claims, especially having the advantage that it might make corruption harder, making it more expensive.

The peasants have also the right to elect their communal authorities, mayor and communal council, but here also administration interferes, here also it is party business. Here also the peasants, without the slightest notion about political colour or shade, find themselves fatally divided into Liberals and Conservatives, according to the person they are made to support. But here also there is much more interest on the voters' side, as a mayor is something more palpable than a deputy; it is quite true that with all their voting they hardly ever get the right person—interference is so pressing and by so many means. Also peasants are often disgusted at this mere formality, and have to be brought to the ballot by entreaties and often by force. And yet it would not be right to say that rather than such vote better no vote at all. No, an institution, be it ever so badly managed, if good in itself, is always capable of improvement in time, while, where the institution does not exist, what is there to improve upon? Let people have rights, all rights; let them even neglect them, a time will come when they will become conscious of them, will understand them, and be able to use them for their own and the general benefit, whilst a country of unfranchised peasants and of moral slaves will breed nought but slaves.

The Roumanians under foreign Government have no political rights. In Transylvania they are striving hard to get them, but only with indifferent success and much sacrifice, till now. To put things clearer, a short digression will be needed, I fear. The Austro-Hungarian Empire is known to be a patchwork of lands and nations, till it really would be difficult to give it a name, if one wished to be just towards all. Hungary itself is made up of Hungarians and Szecklers, Roumanians, Saxons, Servians, Slavs, Croatians, Italians, who have by degrees fallen under their authority by conquest or willing submission (as the Croatians). The old Hungarian kingdom breathed its last on the battlefield of Mohaczi in 1526, when half of the kingdom fell under Austria, and the other half, consisting of the subjected province

of Transylvania and a portion of Hungary, came under the authority of Sultan Soliman II., under the name of the "autonomous principality of Transylvania." A little later, the Sultan conquered Buda-Pesth and organised there a downright Turkish province, the "Pashalik of Buda," which lasted more than a century and a half. This state of things was put an end to only in 1699; in the meanwhile, the Prince of Transylvania yielded to the Austrian Emperor—Emperor of Germany then—the bit of Hungarian land that was still in his power, and was recognised as independent Prince of Transylvania. Towards the Turks, Transylvania was a vassal, never more—a wavering vassality too. After many wars between Austria and Turkey, Transylvania was conquered by Austria and incorporated as an independent province with the Empire, and the nineteenth century found her still in this situation.

The Austrian conquest changed nothing in the internal constitution of the country; the three ruling privileged nations—Hungarians, Szecklers, Saxons—only had representatives in the country's Diet, which was at the head of the Government of the province; the Roumanian peasants were still kept, together with the Hungarian peasants, in serfdom by the nobles notwithstanding all the attempts of Maria-Theresa and her son Joseph II. to emancipate them. We have seen the bloody rising of 1785, and its apparent success, which, however, was only on paper, so that serfdom remained as severe as ever.

But with the end of the eighteenth century, the western wind brought a new breath of liberty all over Europe, down into the East. National spirit is astir; all nations stand up to assert their right to live their own life. In the complicated Austrian Empire, all the various races and nations lift their heads; all want to be reckoned as something, too, besides the ruling Austrian. The Hungarians, aroused by hopes of independence and liberty, begin to prepare to strengthen their ranks, and although their speech was only of liberty and nationality, they decide to assert their own dominion over all the

peoples living in their old kingdom. Thus, in 1780 already, the Diet of Transylvania voted that the Hungarian language should be substituted for *Latin* in all State affairs, and that it should be taught in all schools. At the same time, feeling that the difficulty would arise in Transylvania, where the Hungarians were the smallest nation, they tried to bring about the official union of the province of Hungary, but the attempt came to nought then.

From 1825 the Hungarian agitation begins to take a set course, with men at its head, like the patriotic Szekeny, who set a patriotic example by presenting his whole income for a year (60,000 florins) to found a Hungarian academy. The plan was to denationalise the non-Hungarians by slow, pacific means; to attract the foreign element by the same bait by which the Roumanian nobility of old had been coaxed into the Hungarian bosom, namely, by enticing promises and by the granting of rights and advantages to all those who could learn the Hungarian tongue. The Hungarian nobles were rather against these methods, which they considered as an intrusion upon their privileges; however, the party of Szekeny constituted itself under the name of the national-liberal party, and went on with its work of Magyarisation. It worked marvellously; the non-Hungarians did not appear to see the trap; and they did not realise that they were to forget their own language, in the long run, and were exceedingly grateful for the advantages offered; and the Roumanians took to the bait too, for they readily allow that—

> "You take more flies with a spoonful of honey
> than with a cask of vinegar," *

and they learned Hungarian with strenuous zeal, especially encouraged by the *united* † Roumanian bishop, a

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* "Mai multe muşte prinzi cu olingură de miere decât cu un poloboc de oţet."

† The *united*, that is, the Roumanians of Greek rite who have joined in some of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

Hungarian creature. Fortunately the Hungarians changed their tactics. The younger party, with Louis Kossuth at its head, did not agree in the least with this temporising method, and decided that what they wanted was to make everybody Hungarian at once. In ten years at latest, everybody *ought* to know Hungarian; this language was to be used not only in official matters, but in private ones too; in church; in school, in the family, everywhere. The Roumanians took the hint, and offered resistance—Kossuth saved Roumanism, in the educated classes at least, where it was in greatest danger.

On the other hand, under Kossuth's leadership the national enthusiasm of the Hungarians rose to a pitch never heard of before. If the other nations had known nothing of liberty and nationalism, they might have learned it from the Hungarians. Oh, but it was not meant thus! The Hungarians wanted freedom for themselves, but others were not allowed to wish for it! With a logic unique in the world, the Hungarians denied violently to others the rights they loudly claimed for themselves: Slavs, Croatians, Servians, Saxons, Roumanians, had to become Hungarians if they wanted to live, and Acts passed repeatedly voted the enforcement of the Hungarian language in all business of public *and* private life. The scheme of infant schools for children three years old with Hungarian teachers was a Kossuthian idea. Any means to reach the end: a free, united, consistent Hungary was the watchword. All very fine, and, I dare say, the Roumanians would not have much to say against it, as far as Hungary was concerned, but the Hungarians wanted it to include Transylvania also, and consequently decided to incorporate Transylvania with Hungary.

The Revolution of 1848 was started by the Hungarians proclaiming a constitution, expressed in unmistakably fine words about liberty and suppression of privileges, and suppression of serfdom; and Transylvania was to be represented by sixty-nine deputies, who, however, were to be only Hungarians, Szecklers, Saxons, not a single Rou-

manian—and that in a country where the Roumanians represent 60 per cent., the Hungarians and Szecklers together 27 per cent., the Saxons 10 per cent., and other nations 3 per cent. Still the old, unjust hatred, and that because the land *had* belonged to the Roumanians, and had been taken away from them; quite so: man is much more inclined to forgive one who has wronged him than one whom he has wronged! but that is not the righteous man. Together with the proclamation of the said constitution, stringent measures were taken to prevent the other nations from manifesting their opinions; a severe law against the press was voted. But among the other nations, besides the Roumanians, the Croatians, the Servians, and the Saxons themselves—who, although a privileged nation, did not want to be severed from Austria—began to give vent to their feelings, through the press and meetings, and while everybody else was pretty free to act as he liked, the Roumanians alone were violently denied the right to write, to speak, or to meet. As for the Croatians, the Hungarians tried every means, and for a time with success, to make them friends. However, some forty thousand delegates of the Roumanian people succeeded, with all the spokes put in their wheel, in meeting on the 15th of May, in the field since then called "Liberty field," near Blaj, and, with much order and composure, passed the resolution not to accept union, and to be on the side of the Emperor in the struggle at hand. But when the Diet actually met at Cluj, on the union business, it was surrounded with such display of force and violence that even the twenty-two Saxon deputies who were against it, gave their vote *for* union for very fear of being massacred on the spot, and thus the Hungarians could emphatically announce that the union of Transylvania and Hungary had been voted "unanimously" by the Diet. Henceforth the Hungarians start the most cruel persecutions against their opponents; men are killed like so many partridges, the Roumanians answer in no milder way; civil war is ablaze.

The war was long and destructive of human life; the

Roumanians, badly armed, badly trained for war, badly led by the Austrians, themselves so badly organised, were beaten—the intervention of Russia saved Austria from imminent disaster.

Once Austria safe, surely the fate of her friends could not be entirely neglected. Transylvania became once more an autonomous province of the Empire, and in 1863 the Emperor gave this province the most liberal constitution she ever had. A Diet was elected accordingly and sat for two years in Sibin as the legislative body. But by Hungarian machinations it came to be dissolved; a new one, exclusively Hungarian, met again at Cluj, and at once voted again the union of Transylvania with Hungary. Austria gets entangled in her war with Prussia; attention cannot be spared for Transylvania. After Sadowa, the weakened, vanquished Austria could not but accept divided power with the strong, untouched Hungary, and "dualism" was instituted. The Roumanians protested against the illegitimate union, with no success. However, the Emperor and King again snatched from his Magyar subjects a few rights in favour of the non-Hungarians of Transylvania, to which the Magyars pretended to agree. The "law for the equality of rights for all nations of Hungary and Transylvania" was written down but remained a dead letter; the Hungarians began again to speak of *one* nation in the whole kingdom, namely, the Hungarian nation, which was to be once more the nation of all. This "law of the nations" was only meant to throw dust in the world's eyes; in fact, the Hungarians created for Transylvania an electoral system, which, with the aid of the administration, succeeded in the year 1887 in electing a Diet in which out of four hundred and seventeen deputies only *one* was Roumanian, in a country where *two-thirds* of the whole population are Roumanians; in a country where so much blood has been spilt for rights and liberty! The Roumanians could not see any way to better measures for the future, than that of totally abstaining from the elections—and surely, "the gallant little nation" of the Hungarians may well say that if the

Roumanians have no representatives in the Diet, it is only *their* fault?

And yet, what the Roumanian people really does want, and strives for, is not political rights; the Roumanian peasants only want to be acknowledged as free Roumanian beings and be left alone to develop and live unharassed, unpersecuted, unwronged, according to their own spirit and nature, in the language and beliefs of their fathers and forefathers. But that is not allowed them. And that is why the Roumanians *must* struggle for political rights in order to secure the other advantages, and that is why they are now resuming the political struggle. The situation is hardly bearable, indeed. The Hungarians, not satisfied with having changed the geographical names all over the country into Hungarian names, are Magyarising the names of the people and of the children at school! Kept out of all official situations, even in their own communes, they must know and write only Hungarian; no case before a magistrate, however right it may be, is accepted if not written in Hungarian. Why, peasants have been shot because, having been addressed in Hungarian by the gendarmes, they were unable to give an answer! The smallest function, down to railway porter, is withheld from all not having Hungarian names and not speaking Hungarian. In schools, Hungarian is enforced, and infant schools have been opened to take in children three years old from their mothers in order to bring them up as Hungarians. The peasants being by far the greatest part of the Roumanian population, they are the most persecuted; even charitable associations are not allowed to be started by Roumanians. And if they raise their voice to complain, the Roumanians are threatened with being "swept away from the country"—their own country, eight centuries before the Magyars came in from Asia!—as "ungrateful and perfidious." And the Hungarians are themselves astonished, they say, that between themselves and the Szecklers they have not yet succeeded in annihilating that troublesome nation! But the Roumanians can *bear* a good deal.

In Bukovina, under direct Austrian rule, the Roumanians are on equal footing with the Germans, and their representatives sit in the Viennese Parliament. Roumanians and Germans are so much the more friendly in that province because there is a strong current at work, through the numerous Ruthenians, who have rushed into Bukovina since the time of the union of Bukovina with Galicia, which they both feel a need to struggle against. Bukovina has had great attractions for her neighbours; while, at the time of the incorporation with Austria, the Roumanians made up by far the greatest majority of the population, to-day they only form the *relative* majority, 35 per cent. Roumanians, 30 per cent. Ruthenians, the rest Germans and a mixture. As the popular poet sadly sings:—

"And she is full of foreigners
As the grass is full of brambles,
And she is as full of foes
As the stream is full of stones.
And the sympathy of the stranger
Is like the shade of the teasel:
When you try to get into shade,
The worse you are burnt up."*

In Bassarabia—that is to say, in Russia—who has any rights to speak of? Turkey is out of the question in that respect—although some slight improvements may have been noticed of late.

IV

"Two men walking up a road found a bag of corn. Each of them thought himself in the right to claim the larger part of the contents, and, unable to come to an

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* "Şi e plină de străini
Ca iarba de mărăcini,
Şi e plină de duşmani
Ca iarba de bolovani.
Şi mila străinului
E ca umbra spinului
Cînd vrei ca să te umbreşti
Mai tare te dogoreşti."

agreement, they decided to call upon a judge, who should judge them 'according to God's law.' The judge bandaged his eyes, then taking some corn with both hands he gave it to one of the parties, while the whole remnant of the bag he gave to the other, saying: 'That is God's justice; to some, He gives much—so much sometimes that they hardly know what to do with it; to others, on the contrary, He does not even allow mere sustenance. Had you asked for human justice, I should have divided measure by measure, but you have asked God's justice and have got it. "God's purposes, no one knows."'"

"An unjust reconcilement is better than a just judgment,"*

says the proverb, for—

"Whoever goes to pray to the saint, must bring him taper and incense;"†

and be sure that

"If your pint is full, your sentence will also be good,"‡

and

"On golden wheels turns the law,"§

and so on. Many proverbs tend to show how little confidence a peasant has in law and justice. Of course, he is ready to believe that:—

"What is right, pleases God also,"‖

and will even go the length of taking the optimistic view that—

"Right comes out on the surface like oil;"¶

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* "Mai bine o împacare strâmbă, decât o judecată dreaptă."

† "Cine se duce să se roage sfântuluĭ, să-i ducă lumînare şi tămâie."

‡ "Dacă ţi-i ocaua plină, ţi-i şi judecata bună."

§ "Pe roate de aur se învârteşte legea."

‖ "Ce-i drept, şi lui Dumnezeu îi place."

¶ "Dreptatea iese ca untdelemnul pe deasupra."

but experience has taught him that this is not invariably the case, and philosophically he has come to the conclusion that absolute justice is impossible, and that one ought to be contented with relative justice, or a fair compromise between the parties at strife, allowing that—

"Neither the wolf to be hungry,
Nor the ewe to have two lambs." *

But, of course, all these proverbs are more or less old, and it would be unfair to apply them wholesale to the present state of things. Not that a man may not be wronged by the justice of the present day; men are wronged every day, but that, not by the judge's fault, but by the fault of justice itself, which, by the multiplication and complication of laws and procedure, has created such a deep gap between *real* and *formal* right; and, of course, the poor man, who knows nothing about formalities and procedure, is much inclined to think that the judge has wronged him, to please the other party, who, he is apt to think, has probably bought him, for—

"Money is the devil's eye." †

So much the more will his diffidence be aroused, when his opponent is a gentleman, like the judge himself; no doubt he will think—

"A crow does not pick out the eyes of another crow." ‡

Still more, justice and law-suits imply in most cases the need of lawyers or barristers-at-law; when these, whose number is legion, take in hand the bringing to light of the just and unjust, the peasant may well throw overboard all ideas of justice in despair, and fall into any arrangement rather than go into a law-suit.

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* "Nici lupul flamând,
Nici oaiea cu doi miei."

† "Banu-i ochiul dracului."

‡ "Corb la corb nu scoate ochii."

Thanks to procedure and formalities, law, meant to be the protection of the weak, becomes rather the protection of the strong, who can afford an able lawyer, sure to be up to all the requirements of procedure; and who, moreover, will always find some legal means of winning even an unjust case. That is why the peasant will hardly ever dare to go to law with his superior, the boïar, for, says he,

"He who can, gnaws bones; he who cannot, (gnaws) not even soft meat," *

and,

"The ox cannot measure himself with the buffalo;" †

and therefore he is ready to make it up with the boïar as best he can, to his own disadvantage, in nine cases out of ten.

The lowest court of law is held by the *primar*, the mayor of the village; the small differences of the peasants are judged by him and his councillors at the *primaria*, the mayoralty. This is done in a rather patriarchal way, and if the primar is an honest man, a "man with the fear of God," the peasants have nothing to complain of; but it happens that he is sometimes the reverse of that, and often a creature of the boïar; and, still worse sometimes, it happens that the boïar himself is the mayor of the place—the pasha of the place, rather. Woe to the peasant then:—

"Woe when the wolf becomes keeper to the sheep!
He sheares the wool and skin withal!" ‡

A second court of law is presided over by the "Judge of peace," of whom there is one in every district, residing in some small country town, or even in a village, where

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* "Cine poate, oase roade; cine nu, nici carne moale."

† "Boul nu se poate pune cu bivolul."

‡ "Vai când ajunge lupul sameș la oi!
Le tunde lâna cu piele cu tot!"

there are no proper towns. Such a judge, invariably a licentiate-at-law, that is to say, a university graduate, seems to do his duty well, as a rule, but being a young man, in expectation of the quickest possible advancement, mostly disgusted with having to spend his time in a small, dull place, his relations with the peasant are on the whole of the most distant nature. And yet their work is very interesting, and I have understood that sometimes it really is well done; occasionally only, it is true, but the good examples may find imitators in time. In my rambles about the country I have often had occasion to hear peasants talk quite judiciously about various matters, and when asked about the origin of their knowledge, "It is a judge of ours that told us that;" or again: "We have heard it from the procurer." In connection with that, I am pleased to add, repeated tributes are paid to the ready teaching power of young civil engineers, from whom absolutely uneducated peasants had learned and were able to repeat correct ideas about steam engines, balloons, electricity and suchlike. From all this it appears that among the young educated men, whom their occupations draw to the country, there are noble and judicious ones, who do not think it beneath their station to talk with peasants and explain to them things of which they might otherwise have a quite wrong opinion, not from stupidity or natural ignorance, as is often believed, but simply from want of talking over the matter with people more enlightened than themselves.

Far greater awe have the peasants of the third court of law, the "tribunals," for which the peasant has to go to larger towns, capitals of districts only, where he, as a rule, feels himself ill at ease and as awkward as can be. If the judge happens to address him kindly, he takes it as a blessing; otherwise he seems dominated by the feeling that the judge could at any moment turn him out of the court as an intruder. There is, it is true, a means of dispensing with the stamped paper, but this only for the poorest of peasants who can produce an attestation of pauperism; such attesta-

tions, however, are only issued by the mayor, and at his own discretion. The procedure is very minute and rigorous, and the peasant will often see in amazement that he has lost his law-suit because some small point of procedure has not been fulfilled, although his rights are as plain as daylight; this, of course, is not apt to strengthen his confidence in justice or judges.

For crimes, there is a jury; two sessions yearly are held. Criminality seems to have been mild enough to permit the suppression of the death penalty, with the new constitution of the Free Kingdom. Even hard labour for life is seldom made use of, the highest penalty being mostly hard labour for limited times, twenty years or so, in the salt mines, worked entirely by criminals. Crimes are perpetrated, of course, and are due in most cases to drunkenness, in which state the peasant will strike his opponent unmindful of consequences, and the blow very often causes death. Otherwise, the Roumanian does not kill willingly. Even with the greatest thieves, it has been almost always found that if they killed they were only moral authors of the crime; for the act itself they always had the help of some *tzigan* (gipsy). It is a notorious fact that when capital punishment was in use there never was a Roumanian willing to take the place of hangman; he was always a gipsy. Even to-day the largest number of criminal cases are due to gipsies.

In Transylvania and Hungary, from the official statistics themselves it is evident that there is least crime among the Roumanians. As to the question if there *is* fair justice for the Roumanian people in Transylvania, it would be waste of time to enter into the question, seeing that all the judges are Hungarians and knowing also the humane feelings they cherish. As a sample of fair justice, the so-called "Memorandum law-suit" in 1892 may serve. The leaders of the Roumanians, sick of the political grievances they were suffering from, decided to defend their rights in a legal way; consequently, they addressed to the Emperor a "memorandum," in which

they complained of the injustice done them, and of the unjust application of the Imperial constitution. A deputation was sent to Vienna, which, however, was not received by the Emperor and King. The deputation left a sealed copy of the memorandum for the Emperor, but this was soon returned to them with the answer that the Emperor did not wish to know what it was about! So much does the monarch seem to be King of the Hungarians rather than Emperor of his other subjects! But that is not all. A campaign of persecution was started against the members of the committee, beginning with unlawful breaking into their houses and pulling these to the very ground; they all had to flee for their lives. Moreover, an action was brought against them for having complained, and, after a mock trial, they were sentenced to five years' imprisonment Surely, if anywhere in the world the Roumanian has reason to be satisfied with an "unjust reconcilement rather than a right judgment," Hungary seems to be the place.

The Roumanians of Free Roumania have a code of laws only since the time of the constitution, 1866; it is the French code. Before that they had various codes, all partial and incomplete. But, on the other hand, they have always had the customary law, the *Obiceiul pămîntului*, the "usage of the soil," of which unfortunately no account was taken in the introduction of the new foreign code. For, although it may have had its drawbacks, it had luminous points of justice in it, and besides, it was part and parcel of the very nature, the very blood of the inhabitants of the soil, and to it they cling closely still, in their private affairs, when circumstances do not bring them before the justice of the code.

The first attempt at legislation is not older than the seventeenth century; before that, people lived under the "customary law," of which little is known at the present day. As far as penal offences go, crimes were private, not public offences, and a crime could always be made up with money paid to the party interested.

If a man was found murdered, and the murderer was not found out, the whole village had to pay a collective fine. With money, one could escape capital punishment; on the other hand, it seems that one could very easily be sentenced to it. As to civil affairs, that seems to have been a fair traditional law which gave equal right to inheritance in the wealth of the parents to all children, boys and girls, legitimate and illegitimate children, showing a strong feeling of justice, set above any other social or political consideration; it was a just law which made the wife the natural inheritor of the husband's wealth, to the making of which she had surely contributed, this even when the wife was not legitimised by an official wedding; and this "soil's habit," the peasants hold to even to-day, when they are not impeded by law, and illegitimate unions are frequent enough, especially in the case of second marriages, when an official wedding seems to the peasant almost ridiculous. If a daughter was married at the time of the parent's death, and had got her dowry, she had no more right to the inheritance, were it even such as to entitle her to a large share; on the other hand, no return of the dowry was enforced, even if it were larger than the other children's share. In case of debts, the first claim upon the inheritance was, as it is to-day, the creditor's. In matters of landed property, whoever wished to sell an estate, small or large, could not do so without having asked all his relatives in the first place, the neighbouring *răzăshi* in the second, if they would not buy it themselves. If he neglected to do so, such relatives or neighbours could always have it resold.

As to procedure, if it is intricate and awkward to-day, it was surely hardly fairer in the old times. The absent party invariably lost the case. But the right of appeal was entirely at the prince's mercy, and the result was that a law-suit might be prolonged through generations, or for ever. The principle of *res judicata* seems to have been unknown in civil as well as in criminal cases. Each change of a prince was a ready occasion for the re-opening of a law-suit, and one was never sure to have

done with it, and not be judged again and perhaps condemned, even to capital punishment. How much room was left for injustice one may easily imagine; hence the popular proverb—

"Justice is as princes make it." *

In old times, proof was rarely given by written documents; the usual means of proving a case was by *witnesses*. In those times of perpetual change and insecurity, of want of papers and of documents, it seems that the human *word* had the greatest value in the imparting of justice. Belief in honesty must have been great indeed to found a sentence, penal or civil, merely on witnesses. Perjury was strongly punished, but it appears that liars were not so numerous that people should ever have lost their faith in witnesses.

Most of the cases seem to have dealt with the delimitation of property; in the fear of a possible contest, the proprietors found it necessary to have reliable witnesses, knowing exactly where the boundary lay, and able to bear certain witness in case of emergency; to impress the thing on the young generation, the following method was in use. Youths and children from twelve years of age upwards were taken to the boundary of the land, and for each mark-stone laid, were treated with a smart pulling of the hair, *o păruială*, meant to prevent them from ever forgetting the remarkable stone.

To the present day the peasant is fond of the attestation of his rights by witnesses.

Another means of proving in justice, introduced, it is supposed, under German influence, through the Slavs, but fitted to Roumanian ideas, are the so-called *jurători* (jurators or swearers). These were not witnesses to the facts of the case, but simply supporters with their affirmation in favour of the party who brought them before the court. These jurators seem to have been able to annul even the affirmations of the witnesses; their number

* "Dreptatea e cum o fac domnii."

varied (usually stated by the judge—the prince very often), being generally twelve, and sometimes as many as forty-eight, according to the importance of the case, which then was won or lost, according to their power of taking the oath beside the defendant, with whom they needs must be of an equal station of life; except in land contentions, when even peasants were obliged to bring boïars as jurators. If a defendant was unable to bring jurators, or not a sufficient number of them, he lost his case. On the contrary, a party always lost his cause if his opponent was able to bring a double number of jurators—as much as to say, it seems, that if there are to be liars, they cannot be *the* many! The oath was taken "on the Holy Gospel and the Holy Cross in the Holy Church"; false swearing as well as false witnessing was punished with a fine of six oxen. This system, used in all affairs, civil and penal, was common in all the Carpathian region, in Transylvania as well as on the outer slopes of the mountains. The jurators, who, on the whole, decided the case, were often called upon themselves to judge the affair, making first a minute inquiry into it; after which they had to swear for the one or the other party at strife.

The peasants have besides a good many moral rules of conduct, but as they meet with no practical sanction in *this* world, they do not seem to be so generally binding.

V

Medical assistance is another benefit the peasant is entitled to from the State. The sanitary law provides every *plasa*—subdivision of a district—with a trained university graduate in medicine. The institution is inadequate enough—even when the physician is up to the mark, which is not often the case—as infirmaries and dispensaries are mostly wanting; besides, the area ascribed to a physician is often too large for him. On the other hand, apostles would be required to fill such places, and a young man just out of the university—let

him be up to or below the mark—is, as a rule, much too self-conscious to forget himself and devote himself entirely to the welfare of the people.

The peasant, on the other hand, resorts to the help of a medical man only in desperate cases, and when the cure has not proved miraculous, as he expected, his faith in a physician's powers will be greatly weakened. And the physician will of course prescribe strengthening food and good lodging; and how is the poor peasant to provide all that? For reasons like these the peasant will still, to a great extent, have recourse to incantations from old women—*babas*—and home cures, which latter are often as good as, if not better than, many a medical prescription. Common diseases are malarial fever, not fatal, but very weakening; diphtheria in recurring epidemics, ravaging among small children, and the *pellagra*. That dreadful disease, produced by misery and too hard labour, it seems, is sadly on the increase, bringing after it often insanity, an evil which, fortunately, is otherwise very rare among the peasants.

VI

Schooling—elementary education, in the modern sense of the word—is a new institution with the Roumanian people. An Act passed in 1864 endowed Free Roumania with free and compulsory elementary education—with free also, though not compulsory, secondary and higher education.

In old times, the first schools in existence were schools for the training of the priests; the teaching was religious only, and the language learned was the old Slav, which, we know, was dropped in the seventeenth century. Sometime later, Greek was introduced into the schools, and the schools were multiplied, as the Greeks wanted to promote Greek influences, a result which was not attained, not even among the upper classes. With the revival of nationalism, after 1821, Roumanian schools were founded for the education of the future priests, to which any

boy wishing to learn was admitted. At the same time higher schools were founded for the benefit of the upper classes alone, where peasant boys were not admitted, but where priests' sons were admitted, so that access by the peasantry was possible, but only as a second stage, through priesthood.

The educational methods were of course antiquated, the belief existing that—

"The rod is torn from Paradise," *

that,

"Want teaches man, and the rod the child" †—

maxims greatly contributing to make school a terror for children as well as for parents, for, although a parent is apt to thrash his own child cruelly, he cannot bear to have it done by strangers. On the other hand, the usefulness of children about a peasant's house for all sorts of small services has contributed to make education not very much sought after. To-day the saying still goes: "I am not going to make a priest of him," with a parent who does not want his son to learn much.

The new constitution of the country, on a new or rather a renewed basis, with equal rights and equal duties for all, opened a new horizon: everybody was *compelled* to send his children to the primary schools. This compulsion was a new thing; the peasant looks suspiciously at innovations: "If it is compulsory," he will think, "it can hardly be for *our* good; the boïars would not compel us for *our* good." On the other hand, they could see no immediate benefit from learning—quite the reverse: taking away their children mornings and afternoons, when they could be employed at more useful work at home, was inconvenient. "I cannot afford to send my boy to school," the peasant would say; "I want him at home."

But the peasant cannot help seeing that "the gentle-

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* "Varga e ruptă din rai."

† "Nevoia învaţă pe om şi nuieaua pe copil."

man" has had education; his life seems so much easier, he seems to be doing no work—playing with pen on paper cannot be called work—consequently he will crave for his boy an equal advantage, and, if the boy has done well in a primary school, if he is smart and clever, he will go on up to the other stages of education, all free too, provided, moreover, with bursaries for poor industrious boys, so that a father has hardly any expense until his son comes out of the university a downright gentleman, with some good situation in the administration, magistrature or education—anything. And the father is happy to have his son a gentleman, doing no more work (that is, according to his notions).

But sometimes that new-made gentleman will care for his father no more; he will be ashamed of his family and break off with it, in order never to be reminded of his humble origin. Well, this is the other side of the medal, and knowledge of such cases will make a peasant say: "No, I am not going to let my boy go to school that he may get ashamed of me, like so and so's son." But here we may just as well add that cases of the kind are more and more rare; peasants' sons do become gentlemen, and clever ones sometimes, even distinguished in manners and learning, and are not in the least ashamed of their low origin. Social prejudice has no enduring roots among Roumanians; to be ashamed of a peasant father is quite out of date now, out of the fashion; a man may become whatever he can—his origin has nothing to do with it. And if the promoted sons of peasants are not despised, the degenerate sons of nobles are not more esteemed either—

> "What if thy father has been a prince
> If thou art not a man?"*

Education—an ideal education—could be the fittest sieve to pass a population through, regulating by its results the stages of the social ladder, so as to give the

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* "Ce folos că tatu-tău a fost domn
Dacă tu nu eşti om!"

lead of the country into really fit hands, but, as things stand now, there are many drawbacks. If the peasant properly realises the difference between teaching and education more than the gentleman, it were hard to say, but he has a proverb of his own, seeming to imply it :—

"For a bagful of learning
A cartful of wisdom is needed." *

But, again, a peasant who has had his son at the primary school wants to push him on, although the boy may not be fit for it; he will send him to compete for bursaries, and when not successful he will readily believe that he has been wronged by the "gentleman." Or he may be fatally wronged without any interference from the "gentleman," as places of admission are naturally limited, and only the very best can get in straightforwardly, without protection, if even! The impression produced at home will be that it is useless to learn, as you cannot get on because of the "gentlemen," and if you are not to get on—to salaried situations—why learn anything? and the peasant is not alone to think so. He himself, the peasant will say, and his father and his grandfather, had no schooling whatever, and yet went on well enough without it! The difficulty seems to be to make the peasant understand that learning in itself has a value, though not tending to any important change in the material conditions of life; but all classes find that difficult to understand, and why should a village teacher be expected to explain that which teachers of all degrees fail to make plain and clear in towns?

But clearness will come by itself after all. The peasant must learn that if he can read he cannot be cheated by his employer when the former draws up his bill for labour due or done; that if he knows some arithmetic and measurements, he cannot be cheated when land is measured out for him; he finds out by and by that the

* "La un sac de învățătură
Trebue un car de minte."

boy who has been at school has a better time in the army, when his service time has come, as he understands things quicker, is cleverer, and is consequently better treated. All this works better in the long run than any persuasive words, and although the percentage of illiterates is still wonderfully large after these forty years of free compulsory education, it is none the less true that people get more and more interested in it, and rural schools and school attendance are improving from year to year.

In Transylvania, in old times, teaching was connected with the Church, just as it was in the free principalities of old. The first powerful impulse to Roumanian teaching was given by the union with the Roman Catholics in 1700, when schools were founded for the preparation of a better trained clergy. The non-united clergy lagged rather behind. By a decree of Joseph II. some twenty-five schools were founded; then, higher schools, training schools, were gradually founded, and learning was so flourishing, that by the beginning of the nineteenth century Roumanian teachers crossed the Carpathians and went into Valachia to lay the foundation of higher teaching there, too, bringing thus educational organisation as the voyevode founders of old had brought political organisation. There are now some 3,000 primary schools in Transylvania, and many secondary ones, towards the support of which the Free Kingdom of Roumania contributes a yearly grant of some 39,000 francs.

In Bukovina the Roumanians seem to be also fairly provided with schools.

In Moravia and Istria the disappearing Roumanians are taught Slav dialects, if anything.

In Bassarabia school attendance in Russian schools is compulsory, and nobody would dare to open a Roumanian school.

About the Pindus, under Turkish dominion, the first Roumanian school was opened only in 1864, in Monastir, the chief town of Macedonia. Soon afterwards the question of Roumanian ideas in Macedonia was taken in hand by the Government of Free Roumania, which to-day, with all her wants and her own financial difficulties, contributes

no less a sum than 300,000 francs yearly towards the support of Roumanian schools for the benefit of that far-away branch of the Roumanian nation. There is a large number of primary schools, two secondary, and three commercial ones. That the results are far below expectation is no wonder, in such out-of-the-way places, so very far beyond reach of any adequate or thorough supervision and control, having, moreover, always to struggle against Greek and Bulgarian oppression and local intrigues.

Elementary teaching is much simplified by the fact that spelling is phonetic on the whole, that the peasant speaks grammatically quite naturally, and that in dialect differences are slight enough to permit the Roumanian language to be considered as *one* in the whole Carpathian region. The dialect of the Pindus Roumanians is rather different, so that it has really to be learned by a Roumanian from north of the Danube. For the region north of the Danube, the differences in the dialect are, roughly speaking, made up of a number of words strange to each other, but mostly by reason of the varying pronunciations of the consonants *p*, *b*, *v*, *d*, which they will speak out as *ch* or *k*, *gh*, or *ge*, or *dge*, &c., and the vowel *e*, pronounced as *ă* or as *i*; variations which also constitute the only difference between the literary language and the popular language.

CHAPTER IV

THE PEASANT AND HIS RELIGION

HIS BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

I

CHRISTIANITY in Dacia is very old, and tradition attributes its introduction to the preaching of the Apostle Andrew, brother of Peter. Probably, among the Roman emigrants who began to flock into Dacia even before Trajan's colonisation, there must have been a good number of Christians, and no doubt among Trajan's colonists there must have been Christians too. That Christianity is at least as old in the Carpathian region as the Roman rule is proved by the number of fundamental words in religion, which are all of Latin origin: *Dumnezeu* ("God," from *Dominus-Deus*), *Cruce* ("cross," from *crux*), *sânt* ("saint," from *sanctus*), *Sânta-Scriptură* ("Holy Scripture," from *sanctus* and *scribo*), *creştin* ("Christian," from the popular Latin *Chrestianus*); even the irreverent expression *popaventer* has been faithfully preserved in the very popular saying of *pântece de popa*, for one who eats much. Christianity in Dacia persisted after the desertion of that province; at the time of Constantine the Great, Christian bishops are mentioned in those regions. If administratively any connection of the empire with the regions north of the Danube was cut off, it was not so with the religious connections; these all the time bound Dacia to Mœsia and Thessalonica, on whose higher bishops the Dacian Church depended—Justinian, in the sixth century, founded in Mœsia the Archbishopric of Justinianea Prima, with the set purpose

that it should rule over the Church on both banks of the Danube. The Dacian Church then came under the Bishopric of Rome, and again under that of Constantinople (eighth century), but it is very likely that the supremacy of both was rather nominal during the invasions, or at least during the severest of them. At the time of the Bulgarian invasion the right and left banks of the Danube were conquered; the Bulgarians founded a powerful though transient empire from the Balkans to the Carpathians—which we know to have lasted until 1018. By the end of the ninth century the Bulgarians were converted to Christianity, and in their fresh proselytising enthusiasm they set off converting to their new faith all the people round about them; missionaries swarmed everywhere, in Poland, Russia, Hungary, to preach the Slav form of Christianity, and among them, one is mentioned in a document of the time as having been busy preaching in the "Alps of the Valachians" (*In Alpibus Valachicis*). The Valachs, however, were Christians already, and what the Slav missionary had to preach to them was not Christianity in itself, but the Slav form of worship. It seems that the Valachians did not readily accept it, and an old tradition, handed down from two quite independent sources, tells us that the books of Valachian worship were burnt, which shows that the Bulgarians compelled the Valachians by violence to accept *their* form of worship, in *their* language, by substituting *Slav* books for *Latin* ones. At last, of course, the Roumanians gave in; they did not understand Bulgarian, but by this time they would not have understood very much Church Latin either; so they went quietly to church to listen to the Slav service, just as the Roman Catholics listen nowadays to a Latin service. The mighty Czar Simeon established a *Mitropolit* (Archbishop), who soon became an independent Patriarch, in his capital Preslav, transferred later on to Ochrida. After the overthrow of the Bulgarian Empire, the Byzantine Emperor Basil II., the "Bulgar-Slayer," preserved the patriarchate of Ochrida, with a supremacy over all the Bulgarians and Valachs. Although the

peoples north of the Danube were not subdued by the Greek Emperor, they remained still faithful to the Church of Ochrida. The Roumanians were now quite used to hearing Bulgarian in their churches, although they understood nothing of it; national feeling was very dim in those times, quite in the background of their conscience. As to introducing the vulgar national tongue into church, there was no idea of such a thing at that time, when only four languages were deemed worthy to be addressed to God (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Slav). Besides, a *book* was not a common thing then; it was rather an object of superstition, containing sanctity and superior power in the very leaves and type; a change in the Church books might have been looked upon as a sacrilege.

With the formation of the Valacho-Bulgarian Empire (twelfth century) the ties uniting the Christians on both banks of the Danube became stronger, and intercourse more frequent, and these relations remained the same at the time of the foundation of the two Roumanian principalities, Valachia (1290) and Moldavia (1349). The Hungarians had long since conquered Transylvania (end of eleventh century), and from the tenth century they were Christians, that is, recognising the supremacy of Rome. In the eleventh century, when rivalry between Rome and Constantinople became so strong that it led to the final split (1054), the Hungarians held with Rome, and began to persecute the Roumanians, in order to bring them round to Roman Catholicism. This is the chief cause that led to the large emigration from Transylvania and the foundation, subsequently, of the two principalities. Whilst the rivalry between the Roman Catholic and Greek-Orthodox creeds was thus working its mischief in Transylvania, bringing more and more oppression on the heads of the Greek-Orthodox, a second rivalry, of a milder sort, worked its way into the young free principalities; namely, the Church of Ochrida and that of Constantinople: each was trying to draw the Roumanian Churches to itself. Ochrida had the right of first occupant, and the Roumanians held fast to her. However, the Greeks, ever clever at arguing, succeeded

in coaxing one or other of the Roumanian princes, and these recognised the one or the other Patriarch at will, and it appears that the Patriarchs also made up their minds to draw as much advantage from this as possible. A typical instance we find in a document from the time of Mirtchea the Great, Voyevode of Valachia (1386–1418). This prince had just accomplished a new marriage with a lady related to him in a degree that could not, it seems, let his conscience be entirely at rest; thus, although the marriage was duly recognised by the Patriarch of Ochrida, Mirtchea begged for a supererogatory blessing from the Patriarch of Constantinople also. This holy man wrote, that no doubt the relationship was rather near, but, "in as far as your Archipastor of Ochrida has admitted it, I will neither approve nor disapprove of it, only, I advise thee to be generous to the Church for the remission of thy sins!" This need of being *generous* to two leading Churches—when other sore needs were trying the country and the people —perhaps induced the Valachian prince to keep to *one* Church, and therefore he chose Constantinople, to which he brought round the Moldavian Church also, by his friendly influence on Alexander the Good. From this time there were Archbishops (*Mitropoliți*) in Valachia and Moldavia, independent of each other, but dependent on the Patriarch of Constantinople. To the Mitropolit of Valachia was also given the charge of the persecuted Greek-Orthodox souls of Transylvania and Hungary, and he received the title of "humble Mitropolit of Ungro-Vlachia, Exarch of the whole Ungro-Vlachy and the hills" (Ὁ ταπεινὸς Μητροπολιτης Ονγροβλαχίας καὶ Ἔξαρχος πασις Ονγροβλαχίας καὶ Πλάγηνῶν).

The union with Constantinople did not bring in a quite untroubled life, as the Patriarchs of Constantinople tried more than once to exercise a strong political influence on the countries; more than once also, they tried to nominate Greek Archbishops to the Roumanian sees, and aroused thereby quarrels and troubles. But after a while they were successful in that too, and triumphed over the obstinate resolve of the Roumanian people not to accept a Greek *Mitropolit*.

The Turkish invasion in the Balkan peninsula drove over the Danube crowds of priests and monks of Slav blood and tongue, and by them the Slav influence on the Roumanian Churches was increased, and repeatedly fed by new influences. The Slav language was maintained quite naturally in Church, as it was also used in State affairs, although the people never understood a word of it. Most of these monks were glad to meet with a hospitable and safe refuge in charmingly situated glens hidden among the lofty Carpathians. Many monasteries were thus founded both in Valachia and Moldavia. In Valachia, the oldest are Tismana and Voditza, dating from the fourteenth century; in Moldavia, the monastery of Pobrata, Neamtz and then Putna (in Bukovina). At the same time, voyevodes, in their eagerness to be generous to the supreme Church, were endowing and building monasteries at Mount Athos, *e.g.*, Stephen the Great, his son Bogdan, and later on Basile Lupu, great protector of the Orthodox of the Turkish Empire, and others. To the credit of the monks—and the nuns—it must be said that they had a wonderful taste for scenery; all the monasteries are situated in the most picturesque spots of the country. With their origins wrapt in a veil of legends, like all monasteries, they became not exactly seats of learning, but at any rate centres of religious culture, whence priests, bishops, and archbishops were drawn for the service of the Church. They were also the focuses of the Slav language, whence it came to be taught in the schools that existed in towns and occasionally in country places. But somehow, with all the teaching of it, Bulgarian never became a familiar language to the Roumanians.

In these monasteries there have now and then existed monks addicted to the things of the mind, busying themselves with the writing, or rather with the copying, of holy books, as, for instance, the Four Gospels, *Tetravanghel*, written for the wife of Alexander the Good, in the fifteenth century, but which somehow managed to reach the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Another cause also contributing to the strengthening

of the Slav influence was the fear of popery, a fear shared alike by all Greek-Orthodox countries. The Pope has ever been casting his fisher's net in all directions, and, with never-tiring perseverance, using all means to arrive at his ends. The fear of being taken in that net made the Roumanians even more faithful to their Church usages, consequently to its language, in which there was already a large store of religious literature translated from the Greek. The mere idea of these translations being made into vulgar Roumanian, would have been looked upon as a heresy; even later on, when the first Bible was translated into Roumanian, in the seventeenth century, it was not done without the preliminary blessing of an Orthodox Patriarch.

In proportion as the Christians south of the Danube got used to the Turks, and found that they could live side by side with them, the emigration towards the Roumanian countries decreased, and the culture of the Slav language slackened. From the fifteenth century attempts at a religious literature in Roumanian were made, the oldest manuscript yet discovered being the so-called "Code of Voronetz," in Bukovine.

Whilst the Slav influence was losing ground, a fresh wave of Greek influence made its way into the Roumanian principalities during the sixteenth century. A prince of Valachia, Neagoe Bassarab, the founder of the finest church in Roumania, the *Curtea de Argesh*, was a very pious man, and in order to bring upon the Valachian monasteries the brightest nimbus of holiness, he put them under the supremacy of the Greek churches in the Holy Mountain, Athos; he dedicated them to those monasteries. The Roumanian monasteries were extremely rich, over and over again largely endowed with money and lands by princes and by private individuals—the boïars have always been liberal towards the Church, for "the remission of their sins." The Greek monks took in hand the administration of those riches, drew the revenues up to Athos, and on the other hand began to flock into the Roumanian monasteries, which were soon, in both principalities, overflowing with them, as

the example of Neagoe Bassarab was followed, if not surpassed, in Moldavia also. And these Greek monks took the top of the table in the Roumanian monasteries, and drove to the foot the poor Roumanian monks, much more ignorant than they. And the people had an extremely high opinion of the holiness of the Greek monks, sure to be much holier than their own home-made monks, coming from such holy places as Athos was reputed to be; and thus a Greek influence took root in the Church, to spread out and bear fruits by and by.

But about the end of the sixteenth century another current of Slav influence came, especially over Moldavia, and this time from the north, from Galicia and Poland, under pressure of Jesuit persecution, supported on political grounds by the Polish Government. This last current, however, was only a transient one; it soon died out, and after it the Slav language in Church and State in the Roumanian principalities broke down, to die its more natural death. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the Metropolitan of both countries, deploring the want of knowledge of the Slav language by the priests, had nothing better to suggest for the maintenance of Church worship, which was felt to be dying out, too, than the introduction of the Roumanian language into the Church service, which course was adopted by common agreement between the voyevodes of both countries, Basile Lupu and Matheï Bassarab. We may note in this connection that Greek had begun to be used already in some great and wealthy churches.

The Roumanians of Transylvania did away at the same time, or even sooner, with the Slav language in their own Church, under pressure of the Reformation. The Protestants, having printed books containing their teaching in Roumanian, the Greek Orthodox clergy, in order to guard their own flock against the contagion of the new doctrine, very judiciously decided upon the translation into Roumanian of the Slav religious books, and the use of the Roumanian language in church as the safest of preventives.

The Slav language was dead and buried henceforth for

all Roumanians; it had never been more than a dead language with them, and, in spite of all the renewed fostering of Slav influence, could not be kept alive by any means. In fact, it was dead long before the time of its entombment. For a long while already the heads of the Church had noticed how scanty was the knowledge of that language in the average priest; many an anecdote exists to this day to attest the ignorance of those priests who, unable to say Mass in Slav, used to falter meaningless words, on which the people have made up parodies of the funniest kind, and of which children have composed formulas used in their games to the present day. Other anecdotes again tell us of priests and their sacristans, who, at their wits' end as to what to say in their pretence of Mass, were simply talking of their own private affairs, not of a particularly moral kind either, interlarding just here and there some meaningless Slav syllables. Other priests, again, less resourceful, who perhaps could not even *read*, let alone understand, took up the Bible and, we are told, addressing the congregation: "Good people, do you know what is said in this book?" If the people said no, the answer was, "Then I don't see the use of my telling it to you." If they said yes, then he answered, "If you know, you don't require to be told again." At last the disgusted congregation would decide to catch him by the following trick: when he came with his question half of the congregation would answer no, the other half yes. And so they did, but the cunning priest was still too clever for them, and his ready answer was, "Those who know will tell those who do not know, for thus is it written in the book." Other priests, with more religious feeling in them, and perhaps more sense of duty, composed prayers of their own, with Slav syllables or words mixed up disconnectedly, unmeaningly, very much like the incantations of old women, which prayers were made use of at special occasions of illness or trouble. The peasant used the priest's reading and Church ceremonies very much as he used old women incantations. For his own private worship he had his own simple prayers, handed down from father to son

ever since their first conversion to Christianity in Roman Dacia. Most of the prayers are still in constant use among peasants, as the simple, "Cross in the house, cross in the table, cross in the four corners of the house," &c.; or "Good cross, lull me to sleep; holy Angel, guard me, from heavy sleep awake me, from evil spirit preserve me," and many other prayers.

From the seventeenth century the Roumanian Church has taken to the Roumanian language, and it has ever since been used in poor village churches, but in the rich churches of the towns and in the wealthy monasteries it was soon supplanted and kept away for more than a century by the Greek language, which was driven out only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Roumania only got rid of the Greek monks themselves in 1862, at the hands of the same prince who endowed the peasants with land.

Prince Cuza and the young national party, seeing that the clergy were in possession of *one-fourth* of the Roumanian ground, which ground had been given to the monasteries with conditions of a charitable character by the pious donors, although these conditions had remained a dead letter, whilst the wealth served only to maintain luxury and no holy living, or was drawn away for Greek purposes, decided that the holy Greek fathers —of whom, strange to say, a good many were perfectly Roumanised—should return to their holy homes at Athos and Jerusalem, and that the State should execute the wills of the donors.

But the execution of this decision was extremely difficult, because the Patriarch of Constantinople protested strongly against it, and the Tzar of Russia himself was coaxed into supporting the Greeks. So there was danger on the horizon. But Cuza took upon himself to produce a plan of secularisation on his own account, putting in peril his throne, but keeping the country aloof from responsibility. Long afterwards, a prominent statesman reported the words the prince then used: "When you elected me prince, I had only eight ducats in my pocket, the estate I had from my father was mortgaged, my shop

buildings in Galatzi were sold. Now my estate is freed I have, moreover, bought the new one of Ruginoasa, I can afford to lose my throne if need be, but the country must run no risk." But he did not lose the throne; the monastery lands were secularised and replaced by a small allowance in the Budget, and ever since, the number of those who desired to devote their lives to God became wonderfully diminished; * the monastery estates became State land.

By the constitution of 1866 the Roumanian Church was declared independent—*autocefală*—holding still, from the dogmatic point of view, to the Church of Constantinople.

In the meanwhile Roman Catholic persecutions had become stronger than ever in Hungary, and Transylvania had fallen under Austrian rule. The Roumanian clergy did not see any other way to alleviate the hard fate of the people than by accepting a compromise of *union* with the Roman Catholic Church. They agreed to recognise papal supremacy, to take the Eucharist according to Roman Catholic ritual, to believe in the existence of Purgatory, and to admit the doctrine of the *Filioque*, which had been the starting-point of the split of 1054. Thus, since 1700, the Roumanians of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were, from the religious point of view, divided into two parts—Greek Orthodox and Roman Orthodox —these last are called *uniți* or *uniaiți* (united).

South of the Danube, about the Pindus, the Armîni, under Greek and under Turkish rule, were easily drawn into the Greek Church, and this was the strongest means by which the Greeks worked, and are still working, to push on their work of total Grecisation of the Armîni. A small group of the Macedonian Valachs have adopted

* There are very few Roumanian monks, rambling in small numbers about the old monasteries. The nunneries are better populated with women who have hardly anything religious about them except the dress, and who make a livelihood by their handiwork, especially in woollen fabrics, and an extra income by lodging or boarding townspeople in summer, when the monasteries are turned into health resorts.

the Mussulman religion; these are the Valachs from the Meglen.

II

"Omul trebui să cinstească
Legea lui cea părintească."

("A man must honour the law
(religion) of his fathers.")

Religion is *law* to the Roumanian peasant, and his strongest feeling about it is that he ought to keep it by all means—

"He who his own law honours not
Is called a lawless man."*

To keep to the faith of his forefathers is the first and foremost duty he feels bound to fulfil towards religion, because

"He who jumps into another law
Has no God at all."†

But what this faith really is I am afraid the Roumanian peasant would be very much at a loss to explain. At the best he knows only the outward manifestations of his creed: how to make the sign of the cross, which fasting-days to keep, and how; what the Church garments of the priest are like, and what is the general aspect of the house of God; as to the doctrines of the Church he is not in the least a theologian. And how could the peasantry get a doctrinal knowledge of religion? The Roumanian clergy, whether the regular (monastic) clergy —who have ever had but little to do with the people— or the lay clergy, who are directly entrusted with the care of souls, have always been utterly ignorant, and could hardly be expected to teach what they only dimly —if at all—understood themselves; on the other hand,

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* "Cine legea nu-şi cinsteşte
Fără lege se numeşte."

† "Cine 'ntr' altă lege sare
Nici un Dumnezeu nu are."

it has never been the custom for priest and people to meet on spiritual ground anywhere else than at church. And at church the programme of worship has always been crystalised in the Mass *liturghia*; no sermon, no special teaching. No wonder, then, that the peasant should look upon Church service as upon some magic rites, the supernatural power of which resides in the very robes or movements of the priest and in the mostly indistinct words he utters in his nasal, chanting tone. Even now religious teaching, the elements of it at least, is imparted at school, but then the largest number of the present adult peasantry have never attended school; whence, then, has he received his religious teaching? All the Roumanian peasant know about religion, be it doctrinal or historical, he knows only by oral tradition, by the tales and explanations and beliefs handed down from father to son; all the Roumanian peasant feels and thinks as to moral principles he has got by tradition, too, from ancestral advice and teaching, handed down from generation to generation. The religion of the Roumanian peasant, his beliefs, his ethics, his philosophy, are of his own making, it seems, much more than the result of the priest's teaching. Generally, the Roumanian priest has never enjoyed much respect from his flock except very occasionally, when he personally has deserved it. It is true the peasant thinks much of the consecration of the priest; the sacrament of priesthood really imparts to the priest a special power, the gift *Darul*, which enables him to celebrate the rites, and at the same time gives him a special character in the peasant's eye; but if the peasant kisses the hand of the priest he has met by chance, he will none the less throw after him a straw blade, a stick, a bit of thread, or any small thing at hand, with the imprecation "*Ptiu, piei drace*!" ("Fie, perish devil!") to ward off any mishap that might befall him through the mere meeting with the priest.

Socially, when class distinctions still existed, the priest was the stepping-stone from the peasant to the upper ranks. Peasants were admitted into priests' schools only; priests' sons were alone admitted into the higher schools,

and consequently to higher functions and higher social rank, and yet priesthood does not seem to have ever been a very desirable state:—

"Make me, O Lord, what you please,
Only do not make me a priest,
That I should eat bread
Grumbled upon,
And cracknels
From the poor!" *

The little regard for priesthood, as nothing more than a profession, and not of much importance to humanity, is also shown by the superstition that when a priest has been ordained his wife must go out to meet him, on his coming home, with spade and shovel in her hand, to get thereby a prospect of plentiful burials for him. As to the morals of the priest—setting aside individual exceptions—they are at their best when doubtful, I fear, and this has brought the peasant to the belief that if a priest dies a violent death he will go to heaven; on the other hand, if he dies a natural death, he is sure to go to hell. Very wisely, too, he will advise one—

"Do what the priest teaches you,
Do not what he does himself." †

And as to the priest's teaching, it is an item hardly ever heard, because the Roumanian peasant is not much of a church-goer, but is ready to consider that duty rather an old woman's business. And surely it has been the ignorance and the vices of the priests that have above all kept the people away from church. Things stand on a much better footing in Transylvania, where the clergy

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* "Fă-mă, Doamne, cum îţi place
Numai popă nu mă face
Să mânc pită
Bombăită
Şi colaci
De la saraci."

† "Fă ce te învaţă popa
Nu făce ce face el."

have been called upon to play a political and national part too, and where, in the struggle for life against the enemy, they have felt bound to show more learning and better morality as the only means of success; and that is why they also have always enjoyed quite different treatment from their spiritual sons.

The Roumanian priest is a State official, and paid by the State, but the Roumanian peasant will nevertheless pinch himself to pay the priest for those various religious rites which he would not do without for worlds, and for which the priest is indispensable, such as christenings, weddings, burials; as for the general Church service, the peasant does not care a bit if the priest goes through it or not, and if he had to pay for it, I am afraid he would rather do without it.

Although not often found at church, the Roumanian peasant is a deep thinker and searcher into the inexplicable, which he ever tries to fathom, as proved by his large store of traditions about big things and small things, all trying to penetrate the secrets of nature. All the problems that have for ages aroused the greatest interest in mankind have been thought of, and an answer has been imagined (or borrowed, if thought more satisfactory), and various legends have been shaped to explain nature and its secrets; to answer the eternal whence? and whither? It would take long to enlarge upon all the traditions, especially with all their variations; some of them, however, will enable us to understand the peasant's thoughts about the universe. God Himself is considered as an all-powerful Being; as a good, patient, and good-natured Being, who has once trodden the earth in human shape, mostly in the company of His faithful St. Peter, going among men, healing and mending what was wrong, but often also having very narrow escapes from quite human adventures—like a good thrashing, for instance—which St. Peter was not always fortunate enough to avoid. Innumerable tales are told of the time when God and the Saints walked upon earth.

The universe, the world (*lumea*), is confined to the earth (*pămîntul*). God has made the earth out of nothing,

according to some traditions, by just spitting into his palm; with the help of the hedgehog, according to others; with the help of a much less commendable person according to another tradition—said to be of Bulgarian, i.e., Slav origin—viz., with the help of the devil himself.

God made the earth with a flat surface, floating on endless water, but it being heavier than the water, it is supported by two large fishes. These fishes fretting violently about, the earth went in and out, and so springs, rivers, valleys, and mountains came into existence. The fishes still move from time to time, but are unable to do more than cause earthquakes. The earth is surrounded with water, and on that outer water lie the edges of the sky, which, like a bull-skin, is stretched above, having in it the sun, the moon, and the stars. And beyond the visible sky there are six more skies; in the seventh heaven is the residence of God. According to some traditions, the sky and earth were once very close together, and God with His saints could walk at pleasure up and down; but once an old woman behaved very wickedly towards God, and He was angry; and ascending the heaven with His saints, raised it to its present height for ever. Other traditions tell that God made the earth with the help of the *frog*, which at His bidding dived to the bottom of the sea and brought out some clay for Him, so that He could see that there was earth at the bottom of the sea, which, when He saw, He bid the waters retire on both sides, and the earth came out and rested, as it always will, on the surface of the water. And the frog was rewarded with God's blessing for the service, and that is why it is a sin to kill a frog. And the earth is supported on four pillars, and Judas is sitting at the bottom gnawing at them in order to bring down the earth and drown it, but he cannot succeed, because when he has done with one pillar and moves to the next, the gnawed one grows again. When the devil helps God, it is also from the bottom of the sea that he picks up some clay, only he is all the time trying to cheat God and make a world to his own fancy; but God gets the better of him.

The belief in the existence of the devil is quite as strong as the belief in the existence of God, and the fear of the former in no way weaker than that of the latter. The saying is general among Roumanians:—

"Great is God, but clever also is the devil."*

God has made the devils by thrusting out of heaven some angels who aspired to make themselves greater than Himself; it is a widespread tradition; but another says that when God created man He created angels and devils as well, and that the devils were made on purpose to frighten man, and to keep him in obedience to God. And the devils are innumerable, spread about in the air and down below in hell, where the chief of the devils resides, the devil *par excellence*, the great *dracu*, all the minor *draci* being his servants. A devil is a very troublesome being, apt to appear under all sorts of shapes, especially of animals, but only of those whose hairs he can count; that is why he never yet could take the shape of a *sheep*. Neither can he assume the shape of a *beehive*, the bees being sacred, as they make the wax of which the tapers used in church are made. The devil can enter anywhere, except the church, that is near the altar—which in Oriental churches is separated from the rest of the church —where the scent of the incense is unbearable to him. Incense and the cross will keep away the devil; he is also hardly ever spoken of without the addition of the protecting formula "Golden cross with us" (*cruce de aur cu noi*). In case of danger, if you only are able to make the sign of the cross with the tip of your tongue, you may consider yourself safe.

The names given to the devil are numberless, and are always used in preference to his common name; "the unclean," "kill him the cross," "the horned one," "the small one," "the one on the treasure," "Skaraosky," &c. Space is full of devils, always trying to do mischief; in covered places, in waters where sunbeams cannot

* "Mare-i Dumnezeu, dar meșter e și Dracul."

penetrate, devils are always at work. The devil's object is, of course, man, whom he wants to drag into hell by all sorts of means. Not that the devil is entirely impervious to good feelings; he seems quite accessible to gratitude, and there is a quite moving tale about a devil serving a man faithfully for three years and doing him all sorts of good turns, for a piece of *mamaliga* given when he was hungry. But if a man knowingly enters into terms with the devil he is sure of perdition. Old women—men also, but seldom—are particularly suspected of being in friendly relations with the devil; the power of their witchcraft is universally feared, and cannot be undone save by other witcheries or by a reading by the priest from holy books. The devil-myth is extremely varied, but sometimes, in talking of him, one man or another will meaningly shake his head and say: "What greater devil than man do you want?" However, there seems to be a greater one, *woman*, who alone has been able to turn the devil's hair white! But that one did it by her cleverness; of old witches it is said that they have startled the devil by a refinement of wickedness superior to his own. That is also why hell's foundations are supported on seven old women, and when one happens to give way, the devil runs across the world to hunt up a new one.

In the rear of the devil march other similar evil spirits, for example the *Stafia*, the ghost of a deceased person or animal. Any great building of stone or brick must have a ghost, otherwise it could never stand up. The ghost is supposed to be obtained in this way. The builder takes the measure of the person or animal from behind with a string or a reed, and builds that measure in the wall. Within forty days the measured being is sure to die, and his or her ghost will appear every night about the building, doing as a rule no harm whatever to any one. This belief lies at the bottom of a fine legend about the building of the cathedral, Curtea de Argesh, the *Meşterul Manole*.

The *strigoi*, or the vampire, is the ghost who comes out of his tomb on particular nights. The *pricolici* are men turned into wolves. The *vircolaci* are a kind of animals

eating up the moon at the eclipses. The *moroi* are the souls of unchristened dead babies. The *Mama Pădurci*, the "mother of the forest," is quite an imposing figure, playing a prominent part in almost every tale, appearing under various feminine shapes, especially of old women, grinding her teeth on a millstone in order to eat people, roasted or raw.

To avoid all these foes, the Roumanian peasant has many innocent means, like the throwing of shreds on places where he has sat, the not looking behind when he walks, or not answering when he hears himself called, or making the sign of the cross with hand or tongue; but by far the safest means is to keep quiet at home until after the fateful hour of midnight, as all these spirits are at work only at night. Midnight itself (*Miaza-Noapte*) is a personality of the "mother of the forest" complexion.

About man's creation there are also several traditions. God made man of clay, that is why he is so weak and fickle. All men were at first Jews, and of such a size that stepped easily from hill to hill. Adam was such a Jew; his body was so large that he was not entirely and completely decayed at the coming of Christ. The men of modern size are of later origin, from Christ downwards. Once, some such smaller men were ploughing on a hillside, when there appeared a Jewish girl of some ten or fifteen years of age, and picking up three of these men, with ploughs and oxen, she put them in her apron and took them to her mother, saying: "Look, mother, I have found these flies scratching the ground." "Oh no," answered the mother; "carry them back again, dear; these are not flies: these are men who are to inherit the earth after us." The big men becoming so wicked that no more understanding was possible between them and God, He sent a swarm of the small flies which get into the eyes, and the big men, all getting blind, died of hunger, unable to provide any more for their food. Other traditions speak of these men having come to destruction by the great flood.

Again, ever and anon we come across glimpses of

mythological beliefs as to "giants" (*urieşi*) who came after the Jews; *cyclops*, with one eye in the forehead; men with two heads; *căpcăuni*, who used to eat ordinary men roasted, and were the very worst of all races; then "half men," very weak and stupid; men with seven hands and seven feet, but powerless with all that, as they got entangled in their too numerous limbs. All those men have disappeared now, good just to play a part in a tale; there seem to exist still, it is said, small-sized men, as small as children, called *pitici* (dwarfs), who, nevertheless, are so strong that they can overthrow the strongest man. God made woman at the same time as man, and to distinguish them he put beside them a hoe and a distaff; when they awoke the man took up the hoe, the woman the distaff, and their divergent destinies were thereby settled for ever. But those implements were used rather as playthings then, as man and woman had everything without work. But when woman, under the devil's persuasion, ate apples of the forbidden tree, and squeezed some juice into her husband's mouth as he was sleeping, they were both punished by having to earn their livelihood by hard work with those same implements, the man with the hoe, the woman with the distaff. And hence began the woe and misery of humanity, by woman's guilt alone, and that is why woman has been cursed and has only a three-sided cross on her head, while the man has a full cross with four limbs;—and a peasant woman will always walk *behind* her husband, because his head is divided in four, says she, whilst hers is only divided in three, and it is not fitting ("nu se cade!") that a woman should walk in front of a man. And that is also why woman is weaker than man, and why she never can be a priest, or even enter the sanctuary; and her mind is weaker, too, except at mischief-making, where she gets the best of the devil himself, whom also she resembles more than man does. And many irreverent traditions there are as to woman's origin.

On the whole, the Roumanian peasant does not allow himself criticisms about God's creation; God made the bad as well as the good, and as to why He created the

bad, well, "God did not fill the world with what He would, but with what He could." *

The people have numberless legends to explain the origin of animals and birds, some of them touching indeed; and also of all things on earth, and of the stars in heaven. The stars are lights burning in heaven for men below, and whenever a man dies his star falls. The falling stars are sure forebodings of somebody's death. The falling stars are also called *zmei* ("Kytes," a kind of dragons) of the devil's household, who usually hide in trees, and if a tree has fallen under such suspicion, it is well to burn it, and then the *zmeu* is heard screeching inside until it dies. When a woman falls into unreasonable, inexplicable love, she is said to be tormented by such a *zmeu*, called also *sburător* (a flier), that is why it is such a good action for a man to kill a *zmeu* when he gets the chance. The sun and moon have their own legends; and the Milky Way is either "Trajan's Way," or "the Slaves' Way," to lead the captives back home when they have escaped from captivity. The comets, the "tailed stars" (*stele cu coadă*), are foretellers of war.

The Roumanian peasant strongly believes in the immortality of the soul, in future resurrection, and "the other world" (*lumea cei-l-alta*), in hell (*iad*), and heaven, (*rai*, paradise). The soul going out at the moment of death, in the shape of a bluish vapour, takes its way towards the heavens, but is stopped on the way by a number of "toll gates or duty houses of the air" (*vămile văzduhului*), which it cannot pass unless the dead man has accomplished the traditional usages during life, or others have done so for him at his death. About heaven and hell they think what is thought in general; but to secure heaven and a comfortable life therein, the surest means is the giving away of alms, together with paying for services at church, Masses, and such like; among the faults that will lead one to hell, *injustice* is foremost. In many cases they seem to be quite sure about the appearance of heaven or hell, as

* "Dumnezeu n'a umplut lumea cu ce a vrut, dar cu ce a putut!"

very often they or some relatives of theirs, during some dangerous illness, have *been* taken into the other world, and have actually seen what it is like. Anyhow, they do not seem to fear death much, but prefer an easy death to a hard one; an easy death seems to be the greatest bliss the Roumanian peasant looks forward to for the end of his earthly career.

He also believes in the *end* of the world, the *vremea de apoi* (the time of afterwards), which will be announced by great sufferings and mischiefs, embodied in the "Anti-christ," after which a rain of fire will come down, and the crust of the earth will be burnt nine yards deep, and become as white as chalk, as it was at the very beginning, becoming only dark with the multiplying sins of mankind. Very often the much worried peasant, sick of what he sees and suffers, will look wistfully and say: "*A venit vremea de apoi*" ("The time of afterwards has come"), much inclined to think that the end of the world cannot be very far off after all the wickedness let loose on it.

But now and then you come across latent doubt and unbelief: "*People say*, heaven and hell are in this very world, and there is nothing afterwards," with the quick addition, however, of "but who knows?" So it is safer not to anticipate. Whatever may be in the next world, the peasant strives to fulfil his traditional duties in this. He respects the commands of the Church in paying for Mass, and in fasting and holiday keeping; but the holidays he keeps in his particular traditional way, and besides the Church holidays, he respects a good many holidays of pagan origin. Unfortunately, keeping a holiday means for him just not to work, and nothing more.

III

Spring sets in with March, which "is never amiss from Lent," *Mart din post nu lipseşte*, goes the saying. Indeed, the Greek-Christians are very keen about

keeping their fasts, which are not few: seven weeks before Easter, as many before Christmas; four weeks in June, before St. Peter's Day, and two in August before St. Mary's, besides the three days of the week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Lent is seven weeks long, and in this interval, the Roumanian peasant becomes entirely vegetarian, with no milk, no butter, no eggs, not even olive oil, which together with fish is allowed on certain fasting days—never on a Friday or Wednesday. Monday fasting is not quite so universal, being mostly kept for the welfare of the cattle, by those who possess them. Eating flesh on a prohibited day is the greatest sin possible. There have been cases where criminals appearing before justice, while owning their crime, for the sake of stating the precise time have said, "It was not a flesh day, for we found some food there, but we couldn't touch it, remembering it was Friday."

These severe fasts, especially in spring, have been found to tell hard on the peasant's health. Not long since the Metropolitan sent a circular ordinance allowing people to eat fish during fasts, but the peasants would never hear of it: "The Mitropolit may eat fish himself, if he likes; *we* are not going to!" The rich, on the other hand, keep no fasts at all, but the peasants are not much shocked at it: "The boïars may well afford to eat flesh on fast days; they have plenty of money to pay for their sins, whilst we have no other means of redeeming them except by fasting." The peasant will sell his eggs to buy some vinegar to eat with his garlic and *mamaliga*. Children are obliged to fast quite as much as their parents.

The ninth of March, the "Forty Saints' Day," is particularly feasted, with wheat cracknels or twisted bread, *colaci*, in a ∞ shape, sprinkled over with honey and pounded walnut. A plateful of these *colaci*, called *sfinţişori* (little saints), is taken to church, and these *sfinţişori* are given away as alms all day long if possible. Not only on the Forty Saints' Day, but on every holiday, good pious Christians—women, mostly old ones—take to church

all sorts of gifts, mostly a *coliva*, a soft cake made of bruised corn, with honey and walnut, *colaci*, crown-like twisted bread, and wax candles, and, if possible, oil and wine. They also bring the *primitiæ*, the first-fruits of the season, fruit, flowers, wheat. The Forty Saints' Day is also a weather foreteller: the weather of that day will last, it is said, for forty days to come. Total fasting, eating absolutely nothing, is supposed to draw particular protection from the good saints—still better is it if you can make forty genuflexions for each of the forty saints on the eve of that day. On that day the man takes out his labour implements to get them in good working order; the wife spreads a row of ashes round the house that the serpent may not enter it. The peasant strongly believes in the house's serpent as a protecting being, a *genius loci*, often represented also under the shape of a serpent by his ancestors, the Romans. The house serpent is quite different from the common serpent, and it would be a great sin to kill it, and sure to bring misfortune on the house.

With fasting and genuflexions and hard field labour, the Roumanian peasant has, however, a cheerful prospect to look forward to—the approaching Easter Day. Easter is his greatest feast, and lasts at least three days, often almost the whole week. Indeed, the feast begins eight days before, as the whole sacred week, *Săptămîna patimilor* (the week of the sufferings), is made up of preparations for Easter. Palm Sunday, *Floriile* (from Latin *Florales*), is already the forerunner of Easter—the peasant may even put on the new garments he has got ready for Easter Day, which he would on no account do at any other time.

On Thursday before Easter, *Joi-mari* (Great Thursday), early in the morning, before the third cock's crow, the men make bonfires in their yards, supposed to represent the fire in front of which Peter warmed himself and denied the Saviour thrice before the cock's third crow—practically in those fires the peasants burn up the rubbish that has been accumulating in their yards all through the winter. The women, on the other hand, go to the well,

and throw several pails of water round it, and after these libations they go and spill one pail of water on their parents' grave, and finally bring water home.

For Easter the peasant prepares long beforehand; the last penny is saved for the necessary purchases. If possible, one must put on for Easter only *new* things, or at any rate unimpeachably clean things. The house, too, is prepared for the occasion; not the smallest cottage but will be cleaned from top to bottom, inside and out, and the walls whitewashed, and the woodwork painted red, making the villages look particularly cheerful at this time of the year, the bright cottages being dotted over the green of lawn and trees, a splendid background for the happy crowds dancing on the village green round the traditional swing, the *scrânciob*.

There are Church services in the evening all through the week, but the only crowded ones are on Friday and Saturday. On Friday, the holy *aier*—the holy "air," the holy shroud, a cloth with Christ's entombment painted on it, is taken out of the sanctuary and spread on a table in the middle of the church, and all through the afternoon people will enter silently, kiss it, make genuflexions, and crawl underneath the table. At night it is "buried," after a procession round the church, by the light of yellow wax tapers which every one has in his hand. On Saturday night, on the stroke of midnight, the bells are tolled at the village church; the dark church is soon filled, and when the priest comes out of the sanctuary with his lighted white taper in his hand and announces "Christ has risen!" "Verily He has risen!" comes forth the answer a hundredfold, and in a twinkling all the white tapers in the hands of the congregation and about the church are spreading a joyous light around. All faces are bright, hearts light; the simple people feel full of unaccountable joy, as if now every trouble has been done away with, and only bright prospects are before them; as if with Christ man and all nature had arisen at the same time—and so indeed it is, after dead winter; in nature renewed man feels fresher, the blood runs quickened with new warmth through his veins; nature

is reviving once more in its eternal round, and, part and parcel of the great whole, the human atom is revived with it. It is his own resurrection that man celebrates so heartily at Easter time.

Young people who are able to carry home their tapers burning can see their "future" in the looking-glass.

The long fast is broken at once, with red eggs and *pasca* (a cake made with flour, eggs, butter and cheese), a young roasted lamb, and as much wine as can be had. First of all they greet each other by cracking each other's egg, knocking them against each other with the stereotyped words, "Christ has risen!" "Verily He has risen!" The one who holds the stronger egg is supposed to outlive the other.

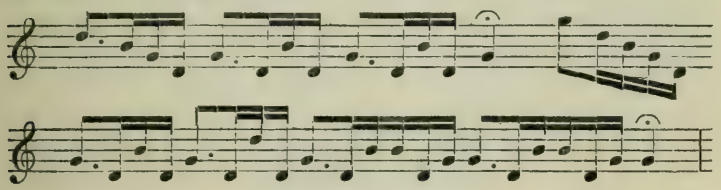
On Easter Day the heavens are open—as they also are all through the week, the "lighted (*luminată*) week;" and a splendid time it is to die in, as the soul meets no toll-gates whereat to pay "air duties," and can enter heaven at once.

The three Easter days are duly feasted with dancing and swinging in the *scrînciob* from morn to night, with eating of *pasca* and "knocking of red eggs" and merriment, and paying of visits and bringing of presents to relations, especially to godfathers and godmothers, to resume on the fourth day the old burdens of life, but with a lighter heart.

On Monday after Thomas (Low) Sunday comes the *Blajini*, a day particularly respected by women in some parts. The *Blajini* (a feast of Slav origin) are supposed to be, as their name indicates, meek, good-natured men, very good and agreeable to God, living in some distant fairyland, by the "Sunday water." They also seem to be out of touch with what is passing in the world, and do not know when Easter is. Therefore, women ought to throw the red egg shells on running water to be carried down to the *Blajini*, so that they may see Easter has come and celebrate it.

St. George, on the twenty-third of April, is, so to say, the herald of spring, of fine weather, which now has set in for good. As the gipsy saying goes: "Give me

St. George in the palm, and I give you the summer"* The Roumanian is just as desirous of fine weather as the ever shivering gipsy. If the spring has been wet and warm, by St. George's Day "the rook hides easily in the green corn." On the eve of St. George's day, loads of willow branches, of ivy or honeysuckle are brought from the nearest forest, and sods from the neighbouring lawn; with these, doors and windows are adorned about the house, and still more about the stables, to preserve man and beast against evil spirits who otherwise might break in and take away the cow's milk, disturb the baby's sleep, the youthful dreams and good luck of girls and boys. This usage is said to be a remnant of the Roman *Ana Perenna* festivals, celebrated in March in similar way. On St. George's eve the milk of the cows or sheep may be taken away by witchcraft. The shepherds, to save their ewes, get up before dawn and blow their *bucium:*



Witchcraft cannot come within the sound area of the *bucium.*

On St. George's morning, at dawn, the girls in their finest attire, with their milk-white wooden pails in hand, or hanging to the *coromîsla* thrust aslant on the shoulder, walk down to the well to fetch fresh water; on their way home they are met by the *flăcăi*, the young men, who throw fresh water into their faces, dispersing with laughter the fair flock, who, quite happy at the bath received at the hands of the favourite *flăcău*, run away to household business, and then to the merry dance on the village green—a hard beaten ground indeed. On St. George's morning everybody provides himself with

* "Dă-mi pe Sîntu Gheorghe'n palmă si-ti dau vara."

some nettles, and then a hunt begins, each trying to prick the other on some bare spot, the alertest, quickest, smartest, always having the best of it.

The third Tuesday after Easter another pagan day comes in, observed by women too, especially in Valachia, the *Repotini*, traced as far back as the Roman *Repotia*. On that day women will gather together, and, putting aside all other work, will set to work to model, with clay and straw, stopples for the stove and *țesturi* (from the Latin *testum*), a kind of vessels to bake bread in. On this occasion the women drink wine, with which they also besprinkle their work. On this day they are supposed to be allowed to behave harshly towards their husbands.

About the third Thursday after Easter, if rain is badly needed, the *Paparude* begin to go about; generally gipsies covered all over with green weeds, mostly wall-wort, with trimming of coloured ribbons and flowers. They go dancing from house to house, reciting words intended to bring down rain:—

"Paparuda-ruda,
Come and wet us,
For the rains to fall
With the water-pails
That the ears may grow
As high as the hedges
To augment the wheat
And to fill the barn." *

The housewives go out and drench them with pails full of water. Though they are similar to the Roman

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* "Paparudă-rudă,
Vino de ne udă
Ca să cadă ploile
Cu găleţile
Şi să crească spicele
Cît gardurile
Să sporească grânele
Să umple pătulele."

Robigalia, the Paparude are said to be of Thracian origin. In some places, if the drought is very protracted, women set to work to knead yellow clay and model with it a miniature figure of a man, a *Caloian*—can it be a remote reminiscence of the Emperor Caloianus or *Ionitză?*—which they set in a small coffin, cry over him as over a dead person—helping out the tears with onion, if necessary—burn incense round him, and bury him, near the well for preference, singing verses—

"O Caloïan-ian
Go to heaven and ask
To open the gates
To let loose the rains
To run down like streams
Days and nights,
That the wheat may grow," &c. *

After three days he is unearthed and thrown in the river, in order to trouble the waters, to raise clouds and provoke rain. That day men will labour till twelve o'clock only, and then drink and dance at the inn. About the bringing down of rain, they have many other superstitions, among them the ghastly one of unearthing the corpse of some one stricken by lightning and throwing it into running water.

The first of May (*Armindin*) used once to be a universal and lively feast, celebrated with much merry-making; now it is falling into disuse, being only kept up still in some measure by those who can afford to give up work on that day, gather in crowds in the green flowery fields, and break their fast with red *pelin* (wine made bitter with wormwood) and a young lamb roasted in its skin.

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* "Caloiene-iene
Dute'n cer şi cere
Să deschidă porţile,
Să sloboadă ploile
Să curgă ca gârlele
Nopţile şi zilele
Ca să crească gârnele," &c.

The last day of May, or rather the sixth Saturday after Easter, always on the eve of Trinity, is the "Day of the Dead," a most important day with Roumanian women. According to their means they distribute alms for the souls of the dead. The Roumanian peasant thinks a great deal of alms, and whenever he gives anything he says, "Be it for the soul of such or such person." Not that he likes begging—far from it. In villages you will hardly ever meet an old beggar, and even then it is more than likely to be some gipsy, or harmless, friendless lunatic. But the peasant, whenever he gives or receives anything for nothing, considers it as alms; it is for somebody's soul. Moreover, a peasant often gives for his own soul; it is quite a duty towards the soul to give alms, *a dărui*, while still in life, for its repose in the next world. "Whoever gives, gives to himself," goes the saying, for whatever you give away in this world you will get back in the next. Even a well-to-do peasant will never feel humiliated if you give him something for nothing—he will much rather feel hurt if you pay him for any kindness, especially hospitality, which he may have offered you—as for an alms, he will accept it, and, think, moreover, he is doing you a kindness by accepting, as it is for the benefit of your own soul. On "the Saturday" of the dead, alms are given and received right and left, with as much *éclat* as possible; new pails, new pitchers, new earthen vessels of all kinds are bought in good time, and, adorned with flowers and filled with wine and eatables, are sent round to friends or acquaintances, even if richer, but of course mostly to those who are poorer. And the recipient will eat and drink from, and use as long as they last, the vessels given him, for the repose of the soul of the giver or any special person mentioned with the gift.

A very respected and much dreaded holiday is that of the Holy Trinity, the *Russalii*, hostile divinities, supposed to have been originally three Emperor's daughters, very ill disposed towards all mankind for not having had attention paid them during their lives. The *Russalii* are said to be ever running about, over fields

and woods, from Trinity to St. Peter's Day (29th of June); they raise the winds and the storms, and make the whirlwinds, and one is in great danger, if caught out of doors, of being raised above ground and brought to destruction by them; especially are they dangerous to children, whom they are apt to snatch from their mothers' very arms. A peasant will not work on Trinity Day for anything in the world. For nine weeks running after the *Russalii* the women will gather no medicinal herbs, in the belief that they have been "pinched" by the *Russalii*, and have consequently no healing power whatever, but rather work mischief. On the eve of the *Russalii* one must put twigs of wormwood under one's pillow, otherwise the *Russalii* might unroof the house and snatch you away withal. On the day of *Russalii* a bunch of wormwood ought to be worn in the belt.

The *Russalii*, said to originate from the Latin feast of the roses, *Rosalia*, are generally mixed up and identified with the somewhat different evil divinities, *Ielele*, "man's enemies," "mistresses of the wind," air or wind divinities, very wicked, imparting all sorts of diseases, especially palsy, to the unfortunate person who should happen to meet them, or only just sit down or tread on a place where they have rested. The belief in the *Iele* has induced the Roumanian peasant to devise innumerable means of protecting himself against supernatural, invisible, indiscernible dangers, as, for instance: never to stop at a crossway—it is the very abode of the *Iele:* if one is not sure which way one has to go from the crossing, one ought rather to stop before it, to make up one's mind, or then go a little further, even though one must come back again, but never on any account stop in the midst of the crossing; never sit down in any strange place and then go away without leaving behind some small thing belonging to you, be it ever so small, as a bit of thread from your garments, or suchlike; never drink water from a spring or well without leaving behind a shred or something; the evil that was to befall you will stick to what you have left. Most of the diseases that cannot be accounted for are attributed to the *Iele.* "It is from

the *Iele* I got it," is the answer as to the origin of many a trouble, like blindness, lameness, pustules, &c. The *babas* (old women) will advise you always to carry some garlic in your belt or purse, to keep the *Iele* at a distance.

These spirits are also called by other names. *Vintoasele* (the windy ones), as they are called about Transylvania and Bucovina; the Valachs about the Pindus call them also *Albele* (the white ones), while the Moldavian peasant has invented for them the appellation of *Dînsele*—which is nothing else than the verbal translation of *iele*, which as well as *dînsele* means the plural feminine pronoun "they." But the universal name with all Roumanians is *Iele*, with the article *Ielele*.

For the curing of diseases got from the *Iele* the babas have all sorts of incantations, in which they give those ladies various polite epithets, in order to coax them out of the diseased body or limb; they call them in turn *Frumoasele* (the handsome ones); *Maiestrele* (the overpowerful ones); *Zinele* (the fairies); *Bunele* (the good ones); which names are also used to signify the divinities themselves.

Another much dreaded saint is St. Elie (Elijah), the Christian Vulcan, the maker of thunder and lightning, who in his chariot of fire drives noisily about the heavens, hunting after devils. God had given St. Elie special power to kill all the devils, ever since the day He thrust them out of heaven Himself, but later on He thought better of it—according to other legends the advice came from the devil himself—and made up His mind to spare some devils, as otherwise men would possibly feel no more need to worship Him, as there would be no more devils to tempt them to sin. St. Elie being rather displeased with the limitation put upon his killing power, God, to cheer him up, promised him, that on his name's day he would be allowed to kill all devils. But then God never tells St. Elie when his name's day is, and that is why there are still devils alive. When St. Elie is out after them, the hunted devils will hide in every possible place, and to avoid their vicinity man must not sit under a tree during a storm, especially not under a plane-tree,

the devil's favourite tree; he must not walk in narrow glens, must keep far from goats or cats, shut windows and doors, as all these are favourite hiding places of the devils, and St. Elie, striking at them, might strike the innocent man or his house. But a thunderstorm can be stopped, or at least any disastrous effect parried, by lighting an Easter candle, if you have preserved one, and making genuflexions, or by sticking an axe in the middle of the yard and showering over it a handful of salt.

On the morrow of St. Elie is the *Ilie-Pălie* (St. Elie's brother, they say), more powerful and more wicked than he, consequently his day is still more strictly observed than the former's, although it is no Church feast at all. But much more dangerous, and for this reason ever so much more dreaded and respected, is the third day (*Foca*) sure to bring fire on the property of the bold person working on that day.

Another meteorological event still worse than thunder is hail, which comes down in the heat of summer to beat down whole fields, just ready for harvest, reducing thus to naught in one hour the hopes of the whole season, and, haply, the food of the whole next year. In connection with this dreadful evil, charlatanism has found its way among the credulous people, namely, the warding off of hail by incantations and witcheries, dealt in by some cunning charlatans called *Solomonari*, who manage to get hold of people's fancy and of people's pence, in many a quiet village, which they pretend to preserve from hail. As chance will often have it, their incantations seem to have really kept away a hail that has been raging a few miles off; if they do not, well, then, it is because of the sins of the people, who surely have not faithfully kept some feast or fast! Many a peasant is ready to doubt the power of the Solomonari, "but after all, who knows, it is better not to draw their anger upon oneself," for they are said by some to be able to bring down hail on unbelievers; and then their demand upon the peasant's purse is not so great, about fivepence, at most one franc for the season from each head of a family, is ample supply for the charlatan. And then there are such

clever Solomonari who can drive rats away from barns, and make them run away in flocks by mere incantation, and cure animals of various complaints, and so on. And, to conclude this subject, there is no end of supernatural means of making and unmaking things otherwise beyond human power, means based on direct suggestion or employed at a distance, apt to puzzle others besides simple credulous children.

On the 16th of November Advent begins, a fast observed just as strictly as Lent, and not shorter. On this occasion there are days considered as holy under the name of *Philippi*, observed also by women alone. They do no hard work those three days; they do not throw out rubbish, it being a dangerous thing on account of the wolves, but they will readily do their washing, in order to burn the wolf's muzzle, as they say, with the hot lye.

To complete the list of the popular saints, there comes in *St. Andrew*, on November 30th, a creepy holiday that is, at least the night preceding it, as some of the dead, the *strigoï* or vampires, are supposed to rise from their tombs, and with their coffins on their heads walk about the premises they lived in during their lives. Before candle light every woman will take some garlic and anoint with it the door locks and the window casements; this will keep away the strigoï. They will only take away the hemp brakes, and using them as weapons, will fight among themselves at the crossways until the first cock's crow, when they hurriedly disperse. But the ghastliest part of it is, that some people are believed to be vampires from their very birth, to live and die as such, without being recognisable by any exterior sign. Some maintain, however, that a living vampire is sure to strongly shun garlic and the scent of incense; others pretend that a vampire has a rudiment of a tail; when these vampires are dead and buried their tombs sink lower than those of ordinary men. And the worst of it is that these living vampires are supposed to take part in the St. Andrew's night row; on such a night they are said to show a fancy for sleeping out

of doors, and then, brake in hand, go to fight at the crossways. Or, again, a living vampire will not go bodily to mix with the dead ones, but his soul will; under the appearance of a bluish flame it comes out through the mouth, takes the shape of some animal, and runs to the crossway. If, in the meantime, the body were moved from its place, the person would be found dead next morning, as the soul could not find its way into it again. Of the persons likely to be vampires, a superstition exists as to this fate awaiting the seventh child of the same sex in a family. A living vampire, if he finds himself discovered, will die; a dead one, if discovered, must be buried again with a stake through his heart, and will never rise again.

St. Andrew's Day has also a value in connection with forecasts or predictions. Early in the morning fond mothers, anxious about their children's good luck, go into the garden, and "with a clean conscience" break some small sprays from an apple, a pear, and a rose tree, or, these failing, from an apricot, cherry, and quince tree. These sprays are bound together in small bunches, one for each member of the young family, and put in a glass of water daily changed. Until New Year's Eve the bunch of the lucky one will be in full blossom.

The great feast, in winter are the Christmas holidays, which, with some interruptions, extend over a whole fortnight, and are kept practically all through the two weeks. The preparations for Christmas are almost as grand as those for Easter, with this difference, that whilst the latter are mostly in the line of clothing, the former are more in the line of eatables, as it ought to be:—

"A gorgeous Easter, a plethoric Christmas." *

Even before the beginning of Advent, a pig has been put apart in a *coteț*, a little pig-sty of his own, to fatten, and whilst everybody else about the house has to deny himself, and from grandfather to grandson draw the

* "Paștele fudul, Crăciunul sătul."

girdle one hole tighter, and ever tighter, the serene and careless pig has a good time such as he has never known. But the *Ignat* (the St. Ignacius on the 20th of December) comes at last; the day of reckoning has come: from the early morning you may see from every yard the blue smoke ascending the sky, with its shadow capriciously stretched across the snow-coated hill. Under the burnt-out straw, thrown aside with the iron fork, the pig is discovered in his hard skin, turned ivory after some rubbing and scrubbing, whereupon the cutting out begins. The joints for ham, the sides for the bacon, are carried up to the loft for smoke; the rest of the meat being mostly used for the filling of the traditional *cârnați* (*carnacius*) and *chiște*, the former being the thin ones, filled mostly with meat, the latter, the wider ones, filled with *passat*, the national rice, the seed of the millet. And on a Christmas day there is no peasant table on which the roasted *cârnați* will not be grilling in their own fat, beside a golden smoking *mămăliguța*. For the well-to-do feel obliged to help towards the good cheer of the poor on such a day, and those who have not been able to fatten, or at least to kill even a meagre pig for Christmas, are sure to get some meat from those who have; gipsies are often in that position. Besides the pork-curing the other great business of baking is going on; the housewife makes for these holidays, if not bread, at least *colaci*, several stoves-full of them, as being the most indispensable eatables for the occasion; these *colaci* are of various sizes, but mostly of the size to get one's fist through. Otherwise, wheat bread is an exceptional food with the Roumanian peasant; his "daily bread" is the *mămăliga*, a hard porridge made of maize flour.

The Christmas Eve, the *Ajun*, the day of the 24th of December, the last of Advent, is a holiday too, and a special dish is eaten in every household, the *turte*. It is made up of a pile of thin dry leaves of dough, with melted sugar or honey and pounded walnut, the sugar being often replaced by the juice of bruised hemp seed, supposed to be sweet too. These *turte* are meant to

represent the Infant Christ's swaddling clothes. The dough is prepared on the previous evening, and in some places it is used as a means of making the trees bear a rich crop of fruit in the coming summer, a kind of suggestion to Nature by threatenings. The wife, with her fingers full of dough, walks into the garden; the husband, axe in hand, follows close after. They stop at the first tree, and he says: "Look here, wife, I am going to fell this tree, as it seems to me it bears no fruit." "Oh no, husband," she answers, "don't, for I am sure next summer it will be as full of fruit as my fingers are full of dough!" And so on with every other tree.

Christmas Eve is announced with great display of gaiety from the very dawn by young boys running about from house to house with the shout of: "Good morning to Uncle Eve!" in return for which they expect to receive something—a *colac*, at least, with an apple or some dried fruit added, or even money. If they are left to wait too long, they will repeat several times the greeting:—

"Good morning to Uncle Eve;
Do you give, or do you not?" *

And if the bounds of patience are passed, humorous allusions will be added, where the expectation of getting something is poor. Sometimes these greetings, called also *colinde*, are enlarged upon, and become elaborate recitations. On the other hand, however, they seem to be gradually dying out, in proportion as those greeted do not seem to find it particularly amusing to be awakened at such an unusual hour and the greeters find it more and more difficult to obtain anything.

On the morning of Christmas Eve the priest walks round from house to house, with a sacristan in his rear, and a boy bearing a kettle full of holy water; the priest holds in his hand a *sfiştok*, a bunch of sweet-basil, which he dips into the kettle, and sprinkles the house all

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* "Buna dimineaţă la moş Ajun!
Ne daţi ori nu ne daţi?"

over. The housewife will drop some coin into the kettle, present the priest with a *fuior* of hemp, a handful of brushed hemp ready for spinning, and invite him to table, where the *turte* are ready, with possibly other fasting dishes, and with wine. The priest may accept or decline, according as the meal appeals to his appetite; at any rate, he must at least taste a morsel, and will hardly ever refuse a glass of wine. The priests have a settled reputation of being able to swallow more food than any other human creature, hence the saying "belly of priest" (*pintece de popă*) applied to those who eat too much.

The real *colindæ* are performed in the evening of the 24th and repeated on the 31st of December. They are supposed to originate from the Latin *calendæ*, *festum calendarium*, pagan feasts, which Christianity, unable to abolish, has adopted and used for its own service, basing them on the cult of the Nativity. The *colindæ* are numerous and varied. All versified, they sometimes reach the length of three hundred verses, beginning generally with a typical verse and the ever recurring refrain:—

"This evening is a great evening,
White flowers;
Great evening of Christmas,
White flowers." *

Or again with—

"Get up, get up, great sirs,
White flowers;
For colinders come to you,
White flowers." †

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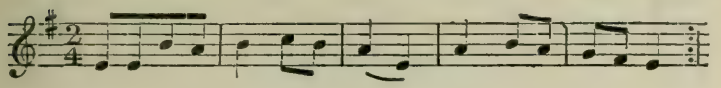
* "Astă sară-i sară mare,
Florile dalbe;
Sară mare-a lui Crăciun,
Florile dalbe."

† "Sculați, sculați, boieri mari,
Florile dalbe;
Că vă vin colindători,
Florile dalbe."

Sung to the following tune :—



Then they will go on to say how they have come, and what welcome they have met with, and how they have christened people, and what they have been presented with in return, and end with the equally typical refrain :—

"For so is the law of old,
From the old and the good men" *

used in connection with the performance of any other ancestral custom—after which follows a more or less stereotyped formula of greetings for "next year and many to come."

A good many of these *colindæ* have a sacred subject: the sun, the moon, the stars are brought into action; God Himself and the saints are set to talk and to act in these recitals. Some of them are interesting as pointing out the virtues which the peasant most prizes, together with his ideas of the next world and the part God and the saints play in his imagination. One of these *colindæ* begins with the description of a river, in which God is supposed to be bathing with two saints, John the Baptist and St. Christmas; the master of the house is then supposed to step into the river also to take a bath, whereupon God, rather astonished at so much daring, asks him peremptorily how he comes to do it: "Whom do you rely upon, being so bold?" says the Almighty; "is it upon Me, or upon either of the saints?" But the man, not in the least abashed, gives the answer: "I am not relying upon you, O Lord,

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* "C'așa-i legea din bătrâni,
Din bătrâni din oameni buni."

neither on the saints, but I am relying on my own good deeds, for I married young, I built my house by the road, I have laid my table across the road, have fed passers-by," and he goes on to describe how he has built bridges over precipices, and dug wells in desert fields, at which God, well pleased, praises him for the good done in this world, promising him fair return in the next, and saying to him:—

"Go to heaven untried,
Sit down to dinner unasked,
Drink the glass unpledged." *

Then comes the greeting formula with the unvaried ending: "Next, and many years to come!" (*La anul şi la mulţi ani!*) Other *colindae* relate the flight of the Holy Virgin with the Infant Christ; in others, Christ, in the midst of His Apostles, explains, at their request, the origin of wine, corn, and oil, as coming from His blood, His sweat, His tears, during His torment on the cross.

There are a large number of *colindæ* of a quite secular character; traditions, very often, or simply ballads adapted to the occasion, with the additional refrain of "*Ler oi Leo!*" (supposed to be a reminiscence of the Emperor Aurelian's name, the deserter of Dacia) and the formula of greetings at the end. National events enter into them very often, as wars with the Turks on land, with the *Franci* at sea, into which a fair girl will often be introduced, saved, and then wedded by some Roumanian hero—the master of the house for the time being; or fine horses, gorgeously harnessed, supernaturally strong, and "seers" into the bargain, most faithful friends to their loving masters; or flocks of tame ewes, pasturing on the hill, with the "seeing" ewe among them, foretelling the approach of the cruel hunter; or again, the *colinda* will tell the tale of a beautiful girl, lying softly in a

* "Mergi la rai nejudecat,
Şezi la masă ne-chemat,
Bea paharul ne' nchinat."

hammock hung between the antlers of a deer, singing in her sweet, sad voice:—

"Gently, still gentlier
Over three-yearling deer,"*

predicting the hunter's approach, her wedding with him, and the timely death of the hart, whose skin and antlers are to adorn her house. Other *colindæ* will describe the pleasures of hunting, with friendship and rivalry between horse and falcon, or an over-conceited stag, too proud of his nimbleness, killed by a smart hunter—frequently the master of the house. In others, finally, domestic happiness is described, with the pleasures of the home, the garden with its flowers and trees, the persons and their gorgeous attire; or some bridal and the many claims of the bridegroom as to dowry, to give them all up at last for a "fair face," and "red lips," and "inky eyelashes." The very end of the world is foretold as happening—

"When the son will beat his father,
And the daughter her mother,
The godson his godfather,
The god-daughter her godmother." †

Then the earth will be—

"Burnt up in the flame of fire,
And in the flashes of hell." ‡

Another customary practice about the Christmas holidays, and a great event in boys' life, is the Star (*Steaua*), a big star, made of wood, borne on a wooden

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* "Lin, mai lin
Cerbe stretin."

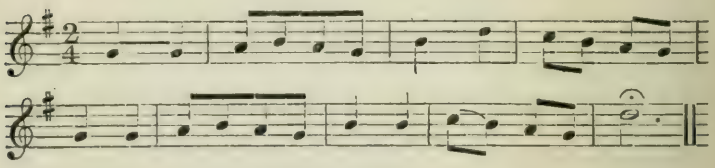
† "Cînd a bate fiu pe tată,
Fiică-sa pe mamă-sa,
Finu-seu pe nasu-seu,
Fină-sa pe nasă-sa."

‡ "Ars în para focului,
Și 'n vălvoarea iadului."

pole, and covered with gilt and painted paper, adorned with frills of cut paper and little bells. In the middle of the star is stuck a representation of the "manger," with the Holy Virgin, St. Joseph, the Baby Christ, and the three wise men; at the back of it, a small candle burning, under glass, lighting the transparent picture. On the top corner of the star there stands a picture of Adam and Eve deceived by the serpent; in the other corners, winged heads of angels. This star is carried about from house to house by schoolboys, who in earlier times used to go attired in special garments, but go now in their ordinary every-day clothes. They stand at the door in small or large numbers, and, shaking the star to make the bells ring, sing carols about the birth of Christ, the adoration of the wise men, and such like, with the somewhat stereotyped introduction of:—

"Who receives
The fair star
With many corners
And small ones,
Presented by Christ
Like a bright sun," *

chanted on the following melody:—



The star is carried about during the whole fortnight,

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* "Cine primeşte
Steaua frumoasă
Cu colţuri multe
Şi mărunte
Dăruită de Christos
Ca un soare luminos."

and the boys get money for their singing. It is supposed to be a relic of the pagan *Atelanæ, mimæ, satiræ.*

Another symbolical representation of the birth of Christ is the so-called *Vicleim* (from Bethlehem, the birth-place of Christ), or the *Irozi* (from *Irod*, Herod, the principal person of the play). With all its religious subject, this is a theatrical performance, hence its description will find a more convenient place further on in the chapter about amusements, together with the many other performances, like *Dolls*, *Brezaia*, constituting the cycle of Christmas festivities.

New Year (*Anul nou*), St. Basil's Day, is very conspicuous in the popular calendar. It is announced from the very eve by the *Pluguşorul* ("little plough"), another amusement in which boys and adults go about from house to house, soon after dark and late into the night, with long recitations of greeting, having especially good harvests in view, with noisy accompaniment of bells and whip-cracking. On the night preceding New Year's Day the heavens open and the beasts speak; one can overhear them and listen to what they say, but it is unlucky; and the trespasser on the beasts' privacy will die before the year is out. If a man can catch the moment when the heavens are open he may get anything he asks for, but the best thing to ask is well-being in the next world, only to catch that short moment is so extremely difficult.

On New Year's morning there is the widespread custom of sowing (*samanatul*), namely, people greet each other by throwing a handful of corn at one another, and saying some appropriate words, such as :—

"May you live,
May you flourish
Like apple-trees,
Like pear-trees *

---

* "Să trăieşti,
Să înfloreşti
Ca meri,
Ca peri

In spring time,
Like wealthy autumn,
Of all things plentiful." *

This New Year greeting is usually addressed by the young to the old, the poor to the rich; the answer to it is some substantial present, money generally. In towns, the houses of the well-to-do are practically besieged with "sowers"; all the servants, all employed far or near, will come to get a tip in return for their sowing: it is really the Roumanian Boxing Day. It is also the day of sending presents to any one. In some places the corn is omitted, but never the greeting, only the greeters go about with a *Sorcova*, a stick ornamented with flowers—originally the flowers of the sprays gathered and put into water on St. Andrew's Day, which were supposed to blossom till Christmas, if the possessor of the little cluster had luck. It seems that the old Romans used to greet each other every New Year with a branch of laurel.

The last act of the great winter festivities is the Epiphany (*Boboteaza*), and the day preceding it, the Eve day.

The Eve of Epiphany (*Ajunul Bobotezei*) is celebrated in the same way as Christmas Eve, with fasting, with eating of *turte*, with the priest going from house to house and besprinkling all with holy water. Fasting on that day is supposed to be particularly good for keeping away all sorts of evils, and pecuniary losses in particular. Boys will willingly fast, in order to have luck at catching birds with the snare. The priest is presented again with hemp and wool, and some meat, and, if possible, with money. By all means he must be invited to be seated a while on the bed, otherwise the brooding hen will not sit on the eggs; moreover, the housewife should have taken care to put on the bed, under the mattress, maize grains; by the priest sitting upon them, the hens will

* In timpul primăverei,
Ca toamna cea bogată,
De toate 'ndestulata."

lay lots of eggs. Besides, it is a very good thing to get some of the hemp the priest has his *fishtock* tied with, which, tied then to the fishing net, will bring in any amount of fish. Girls are very anxious to get some sweet basil from the priest's *fishtock*, it being particularly good for love incantations. If in a household there are troubles and things do not go on as well as they should, the housewife may on this occasion bring back the good luck; to do that, when the priest steps out of the house she must take the *cociorva* (the hooked poker) and, as if by mistake, draw back the trivet by the leg. At night, the heavens open again, and one may make wishes. This night is also particularly propitious for magic with regard to marriage. All sorts of means are employed to find out how soon one is to get married, who the "future one" is to be, and what sort of person. On the Epiphany morning, too, efforts are made to inspire love.

With these festivities the winter cycle is practically closed; in a few weeks, Lent comes in again.

IV

Besides the procession of saints and sainted days just reviewed, the days of the week are endowed with special sacredness and power by the all-hallowing imagination of the Roumanian peasant; every week-day is a saint, a living being, in the popular tales, wanting to be respected and worshipped in his own way. The greatest of all is Saint Sunday (*Sînta Duminică*), a female saint, as all days are—an extremely respectable person, but generous and good-natured: she does not want you to fast; she only wants you not to work, and be as merry and happy as you can. But the most dreaded day, the most exacting and powerful, is St. Friday (*Sînta Vineri*), worshipped by fasting, and, if possible, by total fasting all day long. Many women also do not work on Friday, for health's sake, they say, and never wash their hair on that day, for fear of remaining widows. Girls usually fast for the

purpose of having their hair grow fine and beautiful. Wednesday (*Miercure*) and Monday (*Luni*) are also saints and fasting days, the latter not so very exacting, except for the people who have cattle, and wish to fast for the sake of the health of their beasts. Tuesday (*Marți*) is a bad day to begin anything on, to cut out, or start on a journey. So also is Saturday (*Simbăta*), but if you have some work begun, do not end it entirely on Saturday, but just leave a little to be done on Monday morning; it is good for a long life.

For the months of the year, the peasant has his own popular names, and also various means as to the foretelling of next year's harvest.

January is *Cărindar*, from the Latin *Calendarium*, name reserved by the Romans for the first day of the month only. *Gerar* is another name for January, from *ger*, bitter cold, frost.

February, *Făurar* and *Faur*, worker in metals (*faber*, *fabrum*), especially iron; *Făurar ferecă si desferecă*: February fastens and unfastens (with iron), as frost and thaw come in quick succession.

March is *Mărțisor*, or simply *Mart*, or also *Germănar*, from *germene*, germ.

April is *Prier*, or *Florar*, the flower-bearer.

May, *Frunzar* or *Pratar*—from *frons* and *pratum* respectively, the finest month in the year, because of the gorgeous development of the vegetation, but rain is wanted too, for—

"No rain in May,
No maize-meal to eat."*

June is *Cireșar*, the bearer of *cireșe*, cherries.

July, is the *luna lui cuptor*, the month of the kiln, it being as hot as a kiln.

August, *Gustar* and *Măssalar*, from *messis* (harvest).

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* "Nu plouă în Mai,
Nu se mînincă malai."

September, *Răpciune*, from *raptionem;* also *Vinicer*, the producer of wine.

October, *Brumărel*, from *brumă*, hoar-frost—that is, the small hoar-frost bringer; whilst

November is *Brumar*—that is, the hoar-frost bearer—or *Promorar*, from *promoroacă*, white frost.

December, *Andrea* or *Undrea* (knitting-needle), also *Ningău* or *Neios* (the snower, the snowy).

V

We do not claim to have herewith exhausted the whole ground of popular beliefs, but what we have cited may, we hope, give a fair idea of what are the religion and religious notions of the Roumanian peasant, his *law*, as he calls it. In the course of the ages he has identified it with nationality, and just calls it *lege Romînească* (Roumanian law), as well as *lege Creştineasca* (Christian law); and as he uses the name of "Roumanian" to mean a man, he will also say "a Christian" for a man. His religion, as he understands it, he will keep to, because his father and forefathers have done so. As far as doctrine goes, one may change the whole of it without his being aware of the change; but one could not change a thread of the material part of the cult, of the worship, without his strongly protesting against it. Church and priest are wanted for all the successive rites of life; as to any particular food for the soul, the peasant does not get it from either Church or priest, but by tradition from generation to generation. He knows what ought to be done on every occasion; the priest has only to carry it out, being endowed with the *dar* (the gift), just like a magician with his supposed supernatural power. He strongly believes in incantations, *descîntece*, harmless recitations, often accompanied by medicinal herbs, but oftener also by mere fresh water from the well—*apă neîncepută*, unbegun water; that is to say, water from which nobody has drunk yet. They also believe in an otherwise guilty kind of magic, the *farmici*, witcheries by which

the desired result produced is as often as not brought about by injury to somebody else; in these *farmici*, devil's work is at the bottom. This kind of witchcraft is sinful, and sure to lead those who use it, and the old women who perform it, into hell. But if a man takes the precaution of weighing himself on St. George's Day he is beyond the reach of witchcraft.

The Roumanian peasant has also a great fear of "curses." A man who has been cursed will not moulder for seven years after his burial; he ought therefore to be taken out of the grave, propped against the church wall for forty days, and all passers-by must say: "May God forgive him!" The curse of parents is especially weighty, always being fulfilled, and there are some beautiful ballads on the subject of a mother's curse. A curse is sure to come into effect if pronounced in an "evil hour" (*ceasul rău*); the Roumanian peasant strongly believes in good and evil moments, and attributes to them a great part of his fate. For he believes in fate; without being subject exactly to Oriental apathetic fatalism, he is none the less a convinced predestinarian; his predestinarianism, however, is rather of a consoling character: whenever the unavoidable has happened, "it was written" (*a fost scris*). "So it was to be" (*aşa a fost să fie*). Man does as much as he can for his own good, but fate is stronger:—

> "When there is to fall on man
> A to him unknown evil,
> He will either tarry to wait for it,
> Or run forward to meet it."*

With the spread of education in the country, with a better training of the priests, superstitions and evil practices will die out, as they are already observed to do in many places; the pagan feasts will probably die out

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* "Când omului e să-i vie
Vre-un rău fără să-l ştie,
Ori zăbăveşte până 'l soseşte
Ori dă fuga să-l ajungă."

too, only it would be a pity, as for the most part they are so closely bound up with the origins of the nation. For my part, I hope women will keep them alive, together with the other national usages, just as they have kept alive the national language, carefully tended in the interior of their poor cottages, through all the political storms raging outside.

Through the ages of suffering the Roumanian has found consolation and a renewal of hope in his religious practices; by them he has been taught to put up with his fate, to endure and to wait. *Sfîntul Așteaptă*, "St. Wait," is a very popular and indeed the only genuine national saint, not the same as "St. Never," but I fear a near relative of his.

For other people's religions the Roumanian does not care: of the proselytising spirit he has none. He has some dim idea that there are other Christians too, but those are *lifta, lifta spurcată*—they take milk on a Friday! This appellation of *lifta* comes probably, with a slight metathesis, from *litva, litvan*, Lithuanian, as Roman Catholicism came to the Orthodox Lithuanians from Poland, spread among them, and then made its way towards Moldavia too. The appellation of *spurcat*, impure, soiled, dirty, is given to any other religion but his own by the peasant. The Roumanian peasant is very hospitable to every one, but a vessel in which a man has eaten flesh food on a Friday is *spurcat;* no scouring can make it clean again, but some holy water will easily do it. For his own use, he will not mix pots and plates in which he prepares his fasting food with those for flesh food; this is also the groundwork of cleanliness as a whole. A man who eats flesh on Friday, or eats toads, or frogs, or horseflesh, is unclean: the Roumanian peasant will not share his food, or eat from his plate, but, after all, that is his own business; the Roumanian neither interferes with, nor does he despise or hate him in the least—he simply wishes to have nothing to do with him. Marriages are extremely rare with people of other religions, and even then, only when the latter change their religion. But he much prefers to see a man stick

to his own *lege*, whatever it be; a renegade is more contemptible in his eyes than any frog-eater. Religion is for the Roumanian peasant the greatest obstacle to intermixing with other nations; and where that hindrance does not exist, the Roumanian *has* mixed, and has, as a rule, denationalised the other. What floods of Slavs has he not assimilated in the course of time! And where *he* has been denationalised, it has also been due to religion. The tolerant spirit of the nation breathes also in its national Church: never religious strifes, never religious persecutions; if there was a persecution in the sixteenth century against the Armenians in Moldavia, it was the prince's doing, not the people's; if there were riots against Jews, they took place in towns, not at the peasants' hands, and the cause has never been in the least religious, but economic.

Ignorant and narrow-minded as the Roumanian peasant may appear in the eyes of the severe critic, with his many holidays and superstitions—which narrowness after all is mostly external—he is at all events the very emblem of tolerance and non-interference; this he is in politics, in national affairs, and this he is in religion: he advocates wide, large-minded liberty for all. This also he is socially, in his morals with respect to his fellow-creatures, in which *goodness* is his leading thread in the maze of social relations. "Ever do good," that is his untiring formula.

"If a dog barks at you
Stop his muzzle with bread."*

Not that he expects any reward for the good done; a good deed done brings its own reward:—

"Do the good and throw it on the road!"†

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* "De te latră vre-un cîne
Astupă-i gura cu pîne."

† "Fă binele și-l aruncă'n drum!"

CHAPTER V

THE PEASANT IN HIS HOME AND AT HIS WORK

I

From whatever side one ascends the Carpathians, following the course of one of the numerous streams coming down from them, one is sure to meet with Roumanian villages which, larger and wider down in the valley, become smaller and narrower as we go up, to end in two lines of cottages dispersed on both banks of the stream in the highest glens. Lowly or highly situated, comfortably spread out in a large valley, or hidden away in the narrowest, quietest nook, these villages all have a general appearance of simple peacefulness and alluring homeliness, sheltered on all sides by thickly fir-coated mountains, gladdened by the all-prevailing murmur of the water running along the pebbly vale. Surely people living in such abodes lead nothing but a peaceful and quiet life; but hard toil, scanty earnings, bare living from day to day, is the eternal problem set before them. At the opposite end of the widely spread branch of the Roumanian nation in the Pindus, where the struggle for life, if perhaps not harder, is at all events fuller of real fighting, the villages have also a more appropriate aspect. Built on the highest slopes of the mountains, very difficult of access, with their many storied stone houses, they present a much more imposing, warlike, indomitable appearance than the simple, humble Carpathian cottages. The Roumanian in the Carpathians has managed to live by avoiding and patiently bearing; the Pindus Roumanian

has struggled by armed fight for the same end, but with only indifferent success.

Beyond the Carpathians, in the hilly region of Free Roumania, the villages are situated on the slopes of the hills, amphitheatre-like, but with no other regularity in their respective position except that they all look in the same direction, always downhill. Often also villages extend over two or three hills; then also the principle of looking down is observed in the building of the houses, so that those on opposite hills will look at each other. At the foot of the slopes the valley will usually be broken by a gully, sometimes very deep, a *rîpa*, at the bottom of which a small rill will be noiselessly trickling to become a wild, troubled torrent in spring, at the time of the thaw or after copious rains. This *rîpa* is usually hemmed in with willows, bending their silvery stems above the tiny rivulet. Even in the plain, villages are seldom situated on perfectly flat ground; whenever possible, they are sure to lie on some bending slope and by running water. At all events, in every Roumanian village, good spring water must be at hand, for there are no things a Roumanian prizes more than fresh water and pure air.

Seen from the distance, a Roumanian village will always strike the traveller as a nest of peace, of comfort and homeliness, with those little white cottages peeping among the trees, in their own yards, more or less large, all away from each other, separated by large stretches of green and irregular roads meandering about in all directions. A village has nothing town-like about it; no mistake would ever be possible. From the top of a high hill, let us say in Moldavia, the very home of exquisite hills, the traveller has a wide horizon of hills on all sides apparently moving in the distance under the bluish haze tinged with the gold of a rising sun like the billows of a sea, but studded all over with centres of population; he will always be able to say which is the village and which the town, whatever their respective sizes may be. As different as the Roumanian peasant is from the townsman, so different are their respective abodes.

A Roumanian village looks at its best in spring, when all Nature is green and fresh; after Easter, the cottages are still shining with cleanliness, with their white walls and red wood-work under the thatched roof, like Roumanian black-eyed country girls, with their glistening strings of bright-coloured beads round their necks.

A Roumanian peasant's cottage, the *casa* (pronounced "cassa") as he calls it, is invariably surrounded by a yard, or rather has a yard in front, a garden behind; a house with open front, and a yard only at the back of it, is a rare thing. The fence is usually of hurdle work, sometimes crowned by a large edging of thorns, running along the fence like a boa of feathers round a lady's neck; but this is mostly the case in the vicinity of woods, where thorns are easy to be had. The entrance is provided with gate, and little gate of hurdle-work too, or else of paling, locking only by means of a twisted limewood collar sliding up and down along the terminal posts of both gate and hedge. In the yard the house is, as a matter of fact, the most important if not always the largest building; such house having a particular type of its own, with two variations: either a front with two windows on one side and the door on the other, or else the door in the middle and the windows on both its sides. The latter type is only in use for larger houses, where there is more than one room, but by far the widest spread type is the first variety. No two-storied peasant house is to be found in all the Carpathian region, except very occasionally, as in some quite new construction, an inn oftener than anything else. In the Balkan Peninsula, in the Pindus especially, the houses are built with three or four stories —which means more cramming for space, more need of resistance and defence. The difference in the material used is also striking: stone in the Pindus, clay and wood in the Carpathian.

A peasant's cottage in the Carpathian region is easily built, and is always made by the peasants themselves. Each newly-married couple has, as a rule, to build a cottage of their own, sometimes before, but oftener still after, the wedding, in which case the young pair are

still housed by the young man's parents for a year or so, until the house is ready. The material needed for the making of the house is at hand: mud and wood; in the districts richly wooded more of the latter; in the districts where wood is scanty, more of the former. In opposition to the general idea of building, the roof is made first, the walls afterwards. To begin with, four big pillars are stuck in the ground, denoting the four corners of the house; then the four outer walls are sketched out, as well as the inside partitions, by thinner pillars also stuck in the ground, running along from corner to corner at a distance of one or two feet between each. Room is left for the doors, and the pillars are cut short at the place of the windows. The house being so outlined with transverse beams fastened to the upper end of the pillars, the roof is made of a wooden frame, covered with reed and thatch, or with timber and shingles, or in better circumstances and more modern cases, with iron sheets. Once the roof is ready, the walls are built up: mud, kneaded down with the feet, and mixed with straw, is shaped into clay-lumps, taking here the place of bricks. These clay-lumps (*vălătuci*) are set tight between the pillars above one another, high up to the roof; the rough walls thus ready are left for a time to dry. In parts where wood is more plentiful, the walls are made of hurdles plastered heavily with mud. This plastering, as well as the building with lumps, is generally done by gipsies, being rather dirty work which the Roumanian is always willing to shun if he can. In the mountain districts the houses are made entirely of wood, the walls being built of logs, roughly hewn and straightened into beams, fastened horizontally one over the other, crossed at the ends, each fitting into a suitable notch, permitting the logs firmly to join one another. Such a wooden framework is very much like one of those Swiss cottages one sees in every Swiss village, except that the Swiss cottage is bigger, and that the smaller Roumanian cottage is never left thus in its bare wooden bones. Yes, one may come across such constructions, high up in the remotest glens, but these are not looked upon as houses; such a cottage is only called

odaia (room), and is merely meant to serve as a refuge during the summer work, pasturing or haymaking, in the lofty *poïana*; it is otherwise not inhabited, and is entirely deserted in winter.

When the rough walls are ready and dry, be they of wood or of mud, then their smoothing and refining begins with layers of clay, mixed with cow-dung, repeatedly stuck on them by hand in sheets thinner and thinner, until the walls are quite even and neat, and present not the slightest chink to the most inquisitive eye. This work is also left as much as possible to gipsy women, who seem to have quite an industry of their own in this not over-respectable business of the *lipit* (clay plastering). The plastering is done on the out- and the inside, and on the floor as well. Timber floors are quite a new invention, and are only to be seen in newer houses and richer households; otherwise the floor is made of clay, by the hand, and remade every Saturday evening by every industrious housewife, with an overlayer of cow-dung mixed with black clay as an embellishment.

For one year the newly made house is kept in its clay colour, to dry well, even though it must be occupied during the time; the peasants say it would bring ill-luck were one to whitewash it before the year is out. But after the year's end the house is beautifully whitewashed, in- and outside, from top to bottom—which whitewashing is hereafter repeated at least once in every year, before Easter, by every Roumanian peasant wife. After the whitewashing comes the painting of the wood-work, all about the house: ceiling, doors and door-posts, window-frames, casements and shutters, everything is painted with a dark reddish clay called *lutişor* (red loess) with carefully straight lines at the edges. Outside, the house is invariably surrounded by a *prispa*, a narrow terrace running round the walls, also plastered with clay, trimmed with a tiny edge of red clay, a *brîu* (a band) at its upper side, where it meets the wall, and a broader one of black clay at the bottom, above the ground. A Roumanian peasant woman is extremely fond of these sharp lines, wherever two edges, or rather two colours,

meet, and young girls are particularly anxious to draw them as straight as possible—a shaky *brîu* would look so ridiculous, they say, like old women's teeth! The *prispa* is protected by the jutting-out roof hanging over it, lined underneath with a span of ceiling of red-painted timber, and supported on wooden pillars, also painted with red, at the edge and at the corners of the *prispa*. A little wooden staircase or one or two steps of rough stone give access to the *prispa*, and into the house.

About the yard there are, except the house, as many out-buildings as the owner can afford. Sometimes, even, one may see two houses in the yard, one newer, larger, for show, for guests, where the good things are kept—meant to become eventually the son's house—and another older, smaller, for everyday use. Then there may be a small summer kitchen as well, painted in grey clay, as limestone would be considered much too expensive a material to waste on such a humble building, although the usual summer kitchen might just as well be in the open air: a hole in some corner of the yard, with an appropriate contrivance for suspending the *ciaun* (a kettle in which the *mamaliga* is made). Next come the wooden constructions: a barn, stables (if there are horses, which is rather rare), a shade or hovel for the cattle (which, I am sorry to say, are generally sorely neglected in the way of lodging, the Roumanian peasant seeming to think that cows or oxen can do quite well out in the roughest weather, if they only have plenty to eat); a pig-sty and a hen-coop are quite common in a peasant's yard, but a *coșăr*—that is, a hurdle construction to keep maize in—is only to be found in well-to-do households. The yard itself will be more or less clean, according to the season and the individual taste of the masters of the house; not over-clean, I may say, as a rule: "A little dirt brings luck to a man's house." Behind the house, the garden with vegetables and fruit-trees, and some flower-beds, especially where the housewife is young, or where there are young girls; in the poorest garden there must be at least two or three clusters of *busioc* (sweet-basil), of *minta* (mint), and of some velvety dark yellow *vîzdoage* (gilliflowers).

As to the interior of the cottage, if we now wish to step in, first of all we must not forget to stoop a little, as the lintel is rather low; the master of the house can hardly ever pass a door about his house without stooping, and he, I am afraid, could hardly imagine, without a shiver, spending a winter in a house where one could walk upright "as in a barn!" The door of the cottage is hardly ever locked, except with a wooden latch whose hook fastens at the inside to the door-post. Doors are rarely locked in peasants' cottages; a bolt on the inside for the night, that is all. Padlocks are used by rich people only, who possess valuables to put under lock and key, but the average peasant, when he goes away from home, and has no child to leave behind to take care of it, simply takes a stick and leans it against the door; by this the visitor recognises that there is nobody at home and that he has no business to enter. In villages where many padlocks are to be seen, the moral atmosphere as to respect for property seems to be somewhat dubious, although they will readily tell you: "The padlock is for honest people" (*Lacata e pentru oameni cinstiți*). At all events, padlocks are a much cheaper commodity now than they used to be.

As we enter the peasant's house, the first space we are admitted into is the *tinda* (the ante-room), a plain, scantily furnished place, in which the most conspicuous thing is a big oven (*cuptor*), with a hearth (*vatra*), in front, on which, at least in winter, a perpetual fire is smouldering; a little brick stool beside it is built part and parcel of the wall, and is considered as the place of honour in the most modest tinda. In the corner behind the door there is sure to be a *râșnita*, a very primitive hand-mill, in which maize is ground when needed quickly, or if there has been any impediment in sending to the mill. Besides, we may see in this tinda labour and house implements, as well as provisions of maize, corn, &c., in bags, standing along the wall or in wooden boxes; then a wooden bench, a table, and suchlike. This tinda in most cases has no ceiling, but is quite open to the black smoked reedy roof; often, at the back of the tinda,

there is a small pantry, a *camară* or *celaraş*, as they call it, where the provisions are stored up.

From the ante-room we pass into the principal room, the *casa*, *par excellence*, kept as tidy and presentable as possible, the wear and tear of everyday life going on chiefly in the ante-room. Not very light, the windows being rather small with their little glass panes in the cross-like wooden sashes, which generally open like English windows, the two halves sliding vertically over one another. The house windows have their legend too. The first house is said to have been made by the devil, only he did not know how to light it, and tried hard to carry light in a bushel. God, passing by, came to the rescue by making the windows, but then He put the cross in the middle of the window—the wooden casement—and ever since the devil has had to give it up and have nothing more to do with a man's house. The windows are, moreover, furnished with curtains, and often adorned with flower-pots on the window-sill. The furniture of this room is of two kinds. First and foremost, a big oven with a large hearth in front, surmounted by a large chimney to let out the smoke, just like the one in the ante-room, only kept in a much more brilliant condition of cleanliness and ornamentation. The back of the oven is in winter the most desirable bed, and the oldest couple of the household usually take their rest upon it. From the oven a large bed (*pat*), made of planks, stretches to the opposite wall, covered with various home-made woollen mats or suchlike, and at the end of it is placed a wooden box (*lada*) containing the linen and other precious belongings of the family. On the top of this box lies the *zestrea*, the outfit, the *trousseau*, composed of carpets, coverlets, blankets, pillows, piled up to the ceiling. From the bed (*laiţe*) wooden benches run along the walls all round the room, covered also with *läicere* (long, narrow woollen carpets), which serve as beds for the younger members of the family. The second type of house is without an oven, but has a good stove in one corner; then two large beds set opposite one another in the two further corners of the room, with additional *laiţe* at their

feet, down to the end of the wall. Between the beds, under the window, there will be a table, and in richer houses two or three wooden chairs. In some corner, on the wall and towards the East are hung the *icoane* (the holy images), often adorned with the housewife's bridal ornaments, and in front of them, hanging from above, a *candela*, a little lamp with olive oil and a floating wick, giving a light not bigger than a lentil; the *candela* is always lit on Sunday and holiday eves. Besides, the walls are ornamented with fine tissues, hanging like large draperies, or small kerchiefs with pretty designs, knotted and fixed with a nail, from which hangs some pretty, glossy earthen plate or jug; above the beds woollen carpets are usually hung, and then at random occasional pictures, representing some emperor, prince or general, bought from packmen roaming about the country, very often from Russian *iconari*, who, by selling their holy images, are trying some secret but scarcely novel propaganda, with a view to Russian interests. On the wall will be fixed a long ledge, laden with the best plate of the family; sometimes this is contained in a real cupboard, more or less elaborately carved in wood. Over the big bed we may also often see a transversal beam below the ceiling, on which are hung all the family clothes, neatly covered over by some beautifully spun counterpane.

In such an abode goes on a peasant's humble, unassuming life, with all its tragedies and sorrow, with all its joy and happiness. Or rather, the peasant considers the house as a nice little thing, to be spared and kept as clean as possible, but to be used only in case of necessity. In winter and bad weather he sleeps in the house, but all the summer he will take his rest out of doors, partly on the *prispa*, partly in the *car* (cart), standing ready in front of the house as if for an early journey on the morrow, and well furnished with thick sheets of hemp, the *ţoale;* out of doors, under God's sky, watched over by the stars or lighted by the sun, does the Roumanian peasant spend his life, be it at work or at rest.

It is really seldom that a peasant will be at home on a week day during labour time; all his life is spent out

in the open, in the free air, either as shepherd, which in times of trial has been his chief occupation, or as husbandman, which is by far the chief occupation of the Roumanians : the only one in the plains.

II

When history dawns upon the Roumanians, between the heavy clouds of barbaric invasions, they appear in full pastoral life ; from Carpathian to Pindus, all the elevated *poïanas* are theirs ; all over them they drive their flocks, live on their milk and flesh, dress in their wool. Not that agriculture is entirely forsaken—to plough (*a ara*), to sow (*a sămăna*), to reap (*a săcera*) are all Latin words—it is not forsaken, but is only followed as a secondary pursuit.

The remembrance of his pastoral life the Roumanian peasant has immortalised in the beautiful pastoral legend of the *Mioriţa* (the "She-lamb") in which it is told that three shepherds were pasturing their flocks about "the foot of a ridge, the gate of a paradise," but two of them, jealous of the third, made a compact to murder him. But they were overheard by the *mioriţa*, the little young ewe, who was a seer, and who for very sorrow lost her appetite and gaiety. When her master, with deep concern, asked her about her ailment, she disclosed her dreadful secret, with entreaties to him to take care of himself ; but he seemed to accept his fate ; he cheered her up, and only begged her, if indeed he were to be killed, to tell the murderers to bury him there behind the fold, that he might hear his dogs ; and she should put his whistle at his head, that the wind passing through it might play a tune, upon which the ewes assembling, all would lament him with "blood tears" ; and not to tell the ewes about the murder, but only that he had married a "fair princess, the world's bride" (death) ; that at his wedding, "a star has fallen," that the sun and the moon held his crown, that trees, mountains, birds were his bridal train, and stars his shining tapers. But if she happened to meet his

old mother, asking for a fair young shepherd, she should pity her, and tell her that he had married a king's daughter, in a beautiful place, but nothing about the sun and moon and mountains, birds and stars being the bridal party, as the good old woman would not be deceived by that.

In the Bucegi Group there is a summit called *Virful cu dor*, "the Peak of the yearning," about which the legend goes that a young shepherd died there of a broken heart for the sake of his ewes, which he had deserted for a woman.

Another legend says that the very thistle is nothing but a yearning shepherd turned into a thistle by God at his own prayer, that he might ever stick to ewes who had fled away from him, because he had betrayed them for a girl. On the Steiasa, a large solitary grassy mountain in Valachia, a lonely wooden cross stands on a mound; as I was passing by last year, the guide told me a shepherd was buried there; he had been killed by another shepherd whose ewes he had beaten!

The shepherd's life is very solitary even to-day, all the summer spent on the high *poïanas*; on a Sunday they come down into the villages, taking it in turns at the Sunday dance; they are easily recognisable by their shirts and trousers, which, although of the same cut as the other peasants', differ in colour, being of a brownish tinge and looking rather dirty, although perfectly clean in their way, because they are washed in whey, said to keep away any sort of parasite. On his heights, the shepherd is a dreamy sort of man, often leaning on his elbow and playing to himself and his grazing ewes, on his *bucium* or on his *fluer*, now a gay dancing tune, and now the sorrowful, wailing *doïna*. The dogs around keep good watch—so good, indeed, that you can hardly approach within a mile but they are upon you, quite determined to tear you to pieces if there are no good strong sticks to strike hard in your defence. At the fold the shepherds are very amiable, and will treat you to milk and cheese and *urda* (a sweet cheese) and *jàntița* (a juicy mixture of curdled milk) and excellent new *caș* (fresh cheese). Now, Rou-

manian hospitality is traditional, but, I believe, it is becoming more and more an antiquated tradition. It seems that the desire for gain is spreading from town to country, as times become harder, or rather more materialistic and business-like, for it would be hardly true to say that times are harder now than they used to be. Besides, it seems that all regions are not alike as to the spirit of hospitality: I have come across sheepfolds high up in the Moldavian Carpathians where shepherds would accept in return for the hospitality offered nothing but some tobacco, so hard to get, they explained, on those heights; I have again come across sheepfolds in the Carpathians of Valachia where *mocani*, or Transylvanian shepherds, eagerly pocketed the money offered them. As far as the villages go, my own impression is that Moldavian peasants are much more hospitable than the Valachians. But, after all, I do not see why the poor peasant, too, should not try to get something from the traveller, already used to being so nicely fleeced in towns!

Besides sheep, cattle breeding has been a staple business of the Roumanians; in the Free Kingdom it was so down to the middle of last century. The Moldavian oxen had a widespread renown; by the end of the seventeenth century, as the prince-writer Demetrius Cantemir tells us, they were exported by many thousands every year, and a good bargain for the dealers they were too, being bought in Moldavia for three and five thalers apiece and sold in Danzig at the rate of forty and fifty thalers. The bovine race is found to be much degenerated at the present day. Again, Moldavian horses were reputed a noble race—that nobility, too, is degenerated to-day. Even the pigs are said to be much more neglected animals now than of old.

All this shows that the golden times of quiet, peaceful pastoral life have gone by, and that agriculture is quickly taking its place, stepping from the second rank it occupied of old into the first and foremost; that with the new openings of larger markets abroad for Roumanian agricultural produce—through the improved political conditions since the Treaty of Paris—agriculture has largely increased, encroaching on pastoral pursuits, and

subjecting them to her own wants. But there is room for improving pastoral life, too, certainly cattle breeding, as up to now, in the Free Kingdom at least, all pastures are only natural, producing some 1,800 kgr. hay to the hectare; turned into artificial pastures they could fairly produce double at least. Even in the Pindus, where the Roumanian is still chiefly a sheep and cattle breeder, he feels more and more obliged to take to agriculture—to settle down in the plains, which he abhors, and forsake the mountains he dearly loves.

By far the most widely spread occupation of the Roumanian people is agriculture, which they almost consider as the *only* work, and are so fond of that they would give it up only to become a boïar, to live without working !

The real life of the peasant begins with the coming in of spring. In March, after the snow is gone, the house is little by little deserted, and outdoor life takes more and more hold of the Roumanian peasant. The first care of the Roumanian girl, on a 1st of March morning, is to take a red and a white thread, to twist them together to make a *Mărţisor*, and with a small coin suspended to it, wear it round the neck until the appearance of the first blossom—this in order to preserve a fair white and pink complexion !

Indeed, spring is not always as beautiful a season as the name would imply; it is rather a trying, changeable time, with extreme variations of cold and warmth, of wet and dry, and, above all, with a raging, scorching wind, especially trying on the eastern slopes of the Carpathians, where it comes full blast from north and north-east, to meet with no hindrance whatever, especially since the forests have been so indiscriminately hewn down. Although March means the beginning of spring—the more so for Eastern Europe, where the calendar is thirteen days behind the calendar of Western Europe—yet it is not rare to see in March drifts of snow yards deep—to melt away in foam at the first sunbeams, no doubt,—but still, half of the month at least goes in sleet and rain and gales, with intermezzos

of fine days or at least fine hours. The first nine days of March are called the *zilele babei* ("the old woman's days") or simply *Babele* (the old woman), and popular fancy has invented various legends to explain these sudden changes of weather. One of the legends runs as follows: The sun had been entrusted by God with the care of lighting up the earth, but, weary of all the wrongs and evils he has daily to witness, tries to run away; that is why the place of his rising is shifted regularly to the right in spring, to the left in autumn—change produced as is known by the translatory movement of the earth—and, if he ever succeeds in rising where he now sets, then the earth will come to an end; and that is exactly what the sun is endeavouring to bring about, in order to get rid of the earth, and have all the sky to himself to rest in. But that is not the will of God, and, to prevent the possible misfortune, he has set two saints, St. Nicora in the north, St. Theodor in the south, to stop the sun in its attempts to flee. In spring the sun takes to flight southwards, on a carriage with nine horses, with nine old women on them to incite them to a fast race; these old women produce by witchcraft snow and rain and the worst possible weather to hinder St. Theodor's pursuit, but it is all to no avail: after a terrible race, the sun is overtaken, and brought back to its place.

Another legend, built up on the ancient theme of the dislike between mother and daughter-in-law, says that after one of the usual quarrels, the wicked old mother-in-law, thinking that spring has come because she has seen the sun, puts on nine sheepskins and drives up to the mountain her flock of sheep. Tired and heated, she takes off her nine sheepskins one by one, but sleet and snowstorm came down unexpectedly and she is frozen to death. Other legends, again, are the outcome of a confusion between this last and the historical legend of *Dokia*, alluded to in the first chapter, so one may occasionally hear that the first nine days of March are the days of "Baba Dokia." The first part of March being thus generally made up of very bad

weather, it is considered great luck if one day happens to be fine, and the true grand-child of old Rome, always on the look-out for *omens*, has imagined here one more way of foretelling one's luck for the year to come. One chooses beforehand one day among the nine—some chose only one hour—and if it happens to turn out fine, then luck is at hand; if the reverse happens, there is not much luck to be expected during the year.

After the nine baba's days, the three next one's are the "days of the stork" (*zilele cocostîrcului*), it being the time about which the storks come back from their winter tour, to build their nests on the top of the peasants' cottages. If the first group of storks one sees are in pairs, it is a good omen. Girls are particularly anxious to see just two storks, which sight means a marriage in the same year. The stork is a great favourite with peasants; his very nest on a cottage is a good omen: everything will prosper in that house. But woe to him who kills a stork! It is considered a great sin, and sure to be punished sooner or later; just as great a sin is it to pull down a stork's nest. There is a rather mysterious punishment that might come in more than one way, when least expected, as blows of fate always do, but then the stork may take his own revenge. He will fly until he finds some fire, then he will pick a brand in his bill and bring it to his enemy's house. There are several legends about the stork's origin, just as there are about every bird living in these regions.

The next three or six days after those of the stork, are the "days of the thrush" (*zilele sturzului—sturz* from *turdus*), which bird is also considered as a weather foreteller, a spring's harbinger. A fine legend gives a dialogue between this bird and his beloved blackbird, who most energetically declines all his offers of love, at which the broken-hearted thrush goes into mourning, turns monk and retires into the depths of the mountains. The thrush is said to have been of old a very proud bird, believing that the summer was absolutely *his* making. Once upon a time, the legend says, in long past ages, when God used to walk about on earth, in company

of His faithful St. Peter, they happened to pass on a bright March morning by a large forest. A thrush was just perched on a tree, and swinging gracefully on his twig, was pouring forth one of his most joyous tunes.

"'Good-morning, thrush!' St. Peter said.

"'I have no time to answer!' said the thrush.

"'And why, if you please?'

"'Oh, I am busy with the making of the summer!'" And went on singing—

"To-day I will wed,
To-morrow a brother of mine!"*

The holy travellers walked on. In the afternoon, however, God sent down a fearful rain, and during the night snow and frost as well, just as in the heart of winter. Next morning, as they were passing that very same way, the Almighty and His fellow-traveller had the pleasure of seeing the conceited one humbled. The poor thrush was hanging on a twig, humiliated and benumbed with frost.

"'Good morning, thrush!'

"'Thank you!'

"'What are you doing there?"

"'Ah, to-day I shall die, to-morrow a brother of mine!'"

Ever since the thrush has become a very modest and thoughtful bird; she never more boasts of making the summer, but continuously sings:—

"Trousers and sandals,
For to-morrow it snows;
Long linen trousers
And sandals of leaves
To go to the beloved!"†

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* "Azi mă însor eu,
Mâne-un frate-al meu!"

† "Cioareci și opinci
Că de mâne ninge;
Cioareci lungi de pânză
Și opinci de frunză
De mers la drăguța!"

But by far the chief messenger of spring is the cuckoo (*cucul*). The Roumanian peasant, ever anxious to penetrate the enigmatic future, has a deep belief in the singing of the cuckoo, which he takes as a good or bad omen, according to the direction it comes from. *Mi-a cîntat cucu'n față!*—"The cuckoo has sung to me in my face," is the very best tidings a man can bring for himself after a spring day's labour; also the singing "from the right hand" (*din dreapta*) is apt to fill with delight and hope any peasant's heart, young or old, whilst the singing of the cuckoo heard from behind, or from the left, is a very bad omen. Neither must you run the chance of hearing the cuckoo before eating, for then the year will be a poor one for you. But with all the anxiety as to which side the cuckoo's singing may come from, the Roumanian peasant is nevertheless fond of that bird's song:—

"When I hear the cuckoo singing
And the little blackbird whistling
I don't feel man upon earth,
Neither know I where I am."*

And he is particularly anxious to hear it every spring:—

"Sing, cuckoo, to me alone:
Till next spring who can tell
Whether I shall live or die:
Man is but a transient dream!"†

And many are the popular songs about this bird, which is decidedly more listened to than the nightingale herself. And the twig on which the cuckoo has sung has a peculiar power too; you just take a spray of it and wear it in your

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* "Unde-aud cucul cîntînd
Și mierlița șuerând
Nu mă țin om pe pământ
Nici nu mă știu unde sânt."

† "Cîntă-mi cuce numai mie:
Păn' la anul cine știe
De trăiesc ori dacă mor;
Omul e vis trecător!"

girdle, and people will listen to you as to the cuckoo's song.

Neither is it difficult to hear the cuckoo sing: the smallest grove, the thinnest cluster of bushes, is sure to be visited by this prophetic bird. It sings all the spring, up to the time when cherries are ripe in June; to be then silenced till next spring. "The cuckoo has eaten cherries" is said of a singer who has lost his or her voice. It does not seem to be considered as a very well-balanced bird in its little winged mind: "A cuckoo's head" is said of a silly, thoughtless person. Again, "He is a cuckoo" is said of a tipsy man. Several legends are told about the cuckoo, too, all supposing it to have been a man once, as, indeed, most of the legends about birds or animals tend to show.

At the first sound of the cuckoo's song the Roumanian peasant will yoke his oxen to the plough and ploughing begins, and with it the long and tiring labour for one hundred and forty days, the length of the labour time.

In summer the peasant sleeps exceedingly little, and is always up before dawn. Time-piece he has none; his clock is the cock in the yard. The cock gives his first sleepy crow on the stroke of midnight. The moment the cock crows is the beginning of the first morning hour, the *cântători* (from *cântare*, to sing); the crowing of the cock is singing to the Roumanian ear—to the Latin ear in general also, it seems. The cock then crows about every hour in succession, but louder and livelier as time advances and he is himself more awake.

The *mănecate* (from *mane*) is the moment when the busy peasant gets up, especially if he has some pressing business on hand, a journey, for instance, or if his piece of land is rather far. The third hour is the *zori* (the dawn) when baby day and old decayed night "are stammering at each other" (*se îngână ziua cu noapteă*). Now the cock's part is done, he may crow for his own pleasure or for his hens' gratification; henceforth the time regulator for man is "the holy sun."

The peasant gets up: there is not much dressing, as there has been but little undressing; he washes his face

with cold water and wipes it with a home-spun towel, or, failing this, with his ample sleeve; makes the sign of the cross towards sunrise, and the fourth hour of the day will find him on his way, in good time, or at his work. When the sun is pretty high above the horizon, "three spears high," the hour is called the *prănzişorul* (from *prandium*); it is the hour of the small dinner or breakfast. At mid-day comes the *prănzul* (the dinner), followed by a *siesta*. Towards four o'clock is the *kindia*, the time of the *toaka* at church (vespers). After sunset (the *apus*), comes the *amurg* (dusk); then, after nightfall and supper, the *straja a treia*, "the third sentry" (bed-time).

The sleep of the peasant, if short, is sound, one may well assume, he being always so dead-tired, otherwise he could hardly sleep a wink with the swarm of parasites that are filling house and yard all through the summer. "It is from the cattle," they say; neither do they seem inclined to think that so much ado should be made about such small insects: when one has some leisure one hunts them; otherwise, one lets them alone. But "who on earth has ever seen a summer without fleas!" A summer without fleas is an incredible fiction. The general view of the thing seems rather to be that only dead bodies can be without parasites of some sort or other; fleas seem to be an unavoidable evil of summer life. In my rambles about the country I had often the opportunity to spend the night in peasant houses—fine houses, exceedingly clean houses, in which nobody ever slept, in beds made up with quite new blankets taken out from the pile of the *zestrea*, yet I could hardly shut my eyes for fleas. More than that: I have been sitting down in the forest under trees I had soon to run away from, because of hosts of fleas! There is flea-producing wood, I have been told. In mountainous districts it is even worse, as far as indoor-sleeping goes; few fleas truly, but, in return, no end of nasty stinking, creeping bugs, produced by the pine-wood of which the houses are made. They can be destroyed, no doubt, but this requires such an amount of time, such minute cleanliness, such repeated effort, that a peasant housewife can hardly afford to do anything else than just

let them be. Winter will keep them quiet. No traveller should ever venture on a Carpathian or Pindus tour without a large supply of insect powder, and, moreover, should never let himself be tempted into neglect by the utterly misplaced belief that, in hotels, at least, the servants might have time enough at their disposal to ensure that which the too busy peasant wife cannot, a flealess couch for the night!

But the peasant sleeps soundly; in the open in summer, or indoors in winter, he has made the sign of the cross on his pillow, stuck his fist under it, and will not awake before cock-crow, lulled by the never-failing symphony of dog-barking and lowing of cattle in one or another yard, under the brilliant light of the moon.

The night is uncanny to the peasant's mind. "Midnight" is for him a real being; the devil under all sorts of shapes is abroad doing mischief, but the first cock-crow will disperse all that: the morning is announced, it is near at hand, and everything fearing daylight disappears and hides itself away. That is why the first cock-crow is considered as good as day, and is apt to bring a sigh of relief from the awe-stricken bosom. A man can start on his errand without any fear of the devil. One man told me how once in his youth he was pasturing a herd of bullocks, but somehow, one evening, he was late in driving them back to the village: they ran about, and he lost sight of them. He went in search of them, wandering from wood to field, from hill to valley, but all in vain. At last he seemed to lose consciousness; he did not know where he was no more than what he was about: a cloud had settled on his weary mind, till, all of a sudden, a cock's crow brought him back to his senses, just in time to prevent his stepping over a ditch and tumbling down into a deep pond. Not that you will not find men shaking their head with a smile at the story, and suggesting: "Well, sleep may have troubled him!" But again, some one else will immediately be reminded of some similar mysterious case which had befallen him also in his youth, of which no plausible explanation was to be

given either. The devil seems to have freer play with youths, at all events. But if a peasant has a long journey before him, he will, all the same, travel at night, especially if there is moonlight; and if the road is good and fairly even, he will simply lie down in his cart, as we might do in a railway carriage, and with much more comfort, and his oxen slowly but steadily will draw him on with just as much safety as the engine draws the train.

If the sun is the peasant's clock, the moon (*luna*) is his calendar. The phases of the moon are the chief regulator of peasant activity, especially a woman's; a brooding hen is not to be set on her eggs at new moon, because the chickens will then be continually shrieking; the hair is not to be cut during a waning moon, for then it will fall off. The whitewashing of the walls is, on the contrary, to be done during a waning moon, by which means the troublesome insects will be killed. The planting and felling of the trees is also regulated by the moon, and the sowing of seeds too; if the root is the important part of the plant, the seed ought to be sown during a waning moon; if the outer part is to bear the fruit, then at new moon. The moon is also a weather foreteller; according to the position of the crescent in the sky, one can say if the month, or at least the quarter, is to be wet or dry; if the horns are upturned, there will be a drought; if they turn downward, there will be much rain. If, as it often happens in winter, the moon has a halo, the weather will be severe. At the time of an eclipse the moon is eaten by *vîrcolaci*, and this presages war, or invasion! (*resmerița*).

It is a very good thing to have money about you when you first see the new moon, for then you will not be in want of money for the whole month. But do not by any means come in to announce to those in the house that there is a new moon, for all the pots in the kitchen will get broken!

At the sight of the new moon (*crai-nou*) children will go into the yard and address it thus:

"Moon, new moon,
Cut the bread in two,
And give to us,
Half to thee,
Health to me." *

The moon is a great favourite with the people; she is the sister of the sun, and a beautiful legend tells us the story of their origin.

The powerful sun rises one morning and sets out in search of a suitable bride. Nine years on nine successive horses, he has been running the world over high and low, but has found nothing to please him, except that on a sea strand he has come across a group of nine girls, amongst whom the youngest, sitting in the middle, like "a fine flower," surpassed them all in nimbleness of fingers at weaving and beauty of her face, and this was—

"Ileana
Simziana †
The queen of the flowers,
And of the carnations,
The sister of the sun,
The foam of the milk." ‡

The sun goes up to her, praises her industry, and proposes to wed her, explaining that with all his researches he has not been able to find a fitter wife

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* "Lună, lună nouă,
Taie pânea 'n două,
Și ne dă și nouă,
Ție jumatate,
Mie sanatate."

† *Ileana* is Helen; *Simziana*, supposed to be derived from "semi-divine" is also called *Cosinzeana*, especially about Moldavia.

‡ "Ileana
Simziana
Doamna florilor
Ș'a garoafelor
Sora soarelui
Spuma laptelui."

for himself. Ileana timidly repels the suit, on the ground that "who has ever seen, who has ever heard of a brother wedding his own sister?" The sun insists, however, and Ileana, seeing no other way out of the difficulty, promises to consent if he is able to build for her a bridge of cast iron across the Black Sea, with, at the end of it, a ladder reaching up to heaven. The powerful sun has nothing more to do than just "clap his hands," and bridge and ladder are ready in a moment. Then, going up the ladder, the sun gets into heaven, where he finds Adam and Eve, who, hearing of his arrival, are awfully shocked, and try by all means to bring home to him the unfitness, nay the great sin, of wedding one's sister. They take him over the heavens, where he sees long tables with joyous guests around, and all sorts of pleasant things. Then over hell, where he sees all sorts of dreadful punishments for sinners. But it is all in vain. The sun was young then, passion had the best of him, and he came down to his sister pressing his suit harder than ever. After repeated protestations, Simziana, in order to win time, asks for a copper bridge with a cathedral at the end, to be married in; but she is immediately granted her desire by the mere clapping of the sun's hands, and she must give in. They start for the church, he leading her in front of him and holding her by the hand. But Ileana has her own scheme; she asks the sun to let her walk behind, pointing out how unfit it is for a woman to walk in front of her husband. Left behind, she makes the sign of the cross, jumps into the sea and is drowned: God pities her and turns her into a barbel. The sun at once commands fishers to search for her through the whole sea, but they fish out nothing but a barbel. Saints come down from heaven, clean her neatly of her scales, and throw her up into the sky, Adam and Eve take her in; they polish her and call her *Luna*. She weeps bitter tears for fear of again meeting the sun, but God is kind to her and orders that, although her dominion will be in the sky as well as the sun's, he shall never come within reach of her, and so it is that—

"When the moon shines
The sun sets;
When the sun rises
The moon dives in the sea." *

III

The Roumanians are chiefly, if not solely, an agricultural population, and in Free Roumania more than anywhere else. A German expert in the matter assigns her the third place among the agricultural countries of the world; she comes third only after Russia and the United States, which, colossal as they are, being 69 and 41 times respectively the size of Roumania, produce each only about eight times as much as she does, Roumania cultivating 20·7 per cent.—60 per cent. of her superficies—the other two only 8·3 per cent. and 5·2 per cent. respectively. And to think that the great giants should still wish to bite a mouthful from the mite's tiny morsel!

The chief agricultural products are wheat and maize. The soil is very fertile, mostly "heavy land," exactly the best fitted for corn-growing. The arable stratum is deep; some places, like the Delta and the Bugeac or south of Bassarabia, are said to be the most fertile in the world, with an arable layer of one metre depth. With such soil, no wonder that manuring is quite a novelty, and looked at by the peasants as a wonder in itself. On the other hand, agricultural methods are very behind the times. The ploughing is still done by the old simple plough, drawn by oxen, only very seldom by horses; but there was a time, not very far back, when even the plough was of wood! To-day, one may see on Roumanian soil the latest improvements of agricultural machinery, but that is on the lands of rich

* "Luna când luceşte
Soarele sfinţeşte;
Soare când răsare
Luna intra'n mare."

agriculturists only, and here we are concerned with plain peasants only, small agriculturists, whose number is reckoned to be some 937,389, as against some 4,060 large and middle agriculturists, owning land above one hundred hectares each. From early spring into late autumn, with hardly an interruption in summer, one may see ploughs with two at least, or three and four pairs of oxen, slowly marching up and down hill, and trimming the earth with dark velvet stripes, growing broader and broader under their untiring steps, till they have covered the whole field with an ample brown cloak. The oldest man holds the horns of the plough, to draw the furrow straight; a boy with his long whip drives the oxen, who walk sedately on, under the old-fashioned heavy yoke, looking, with their melancholy black eye, as though they had long given up all hope of progress in their employment. With all his slowness in adopting improvements, the peasant seems to have got a deep sense of the suffering connected with the yoke, but instead of bestowing his sympathy on the ox, it is the yoke he has made an almost sacred thing of. It is a sin to put into the fire a yoke, or even a splinter of it.

The sowing is done by hand only. A pretty sight to look at is the sower, with arms swinging regularly, as if in the act of pronouncing incantations on the fresh dark furrow. Still prettier the sight of mowers, in a straight, long row in the flowery meadow; a splendid and delightful exercise too, and if machines were introduced for every other work, mowing, at least, should be left to the hand scythe, and as many people as possible induced to partake in it—it would widen the area of human happiness! But machines *should* be introduced as soon as possible for the cutting of wheat; the sickle is an instrument of torture, and reaping the most tiring and hardest toil in the fields, and not in the least a healthy exercise either, as mowing is. Hoeing is done in very primitive ways too, and very hard work it is, but at least it has the advantage of being a healthy, strengthening occupation. And what amount of hoeing is required one may imagine, knowing that Free

Roumania alone grows maize on more than two million hectares, that every maize field requires at least two successive hoeings, and that maize is the staple food of the Roumanians at large. It is striking how all Latin people took to maize, imported from America only in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Before maize, the Roumanian's food was millet, called in Roumanian "*meiū*" or *malai*, whence the name of *mamaliga*, made now of maize, the *polenta* of the Italians, a kind of hard porridge, only sweeter and tastier than porridge. Millet is almost out of use now, and grown only on a very small scale. Maize production is difficult, as it has been calculated that for one hectare of maize the labour required is 42 days, while the same hectare of wheat requires only 10 days' labour. The wheat grown in Roumania is said to be of the very best quality, richer in gluten than any other in Europe. There are two sorts of wheat; by far the most appreciated is the autumn corn, sown in September, which, if there is plenty of snow in winter, will answer splendidly, but woe if the winter has been bare of snow! Then the agriculturist will be glad to fall back on the spring corn. Oats seem to answer very well, but are cultivated on a comparatively small area, being only used for horse feeding, and not much asked for abroad, it appears. Porridge is an unknown thing among Roumanians, and oatmeal bread is considered as a calamity, to fall on poor people in famine times only. Neither does rye bread enjoy much popularity, and it is cultivated on a still smaller area. Rape-seed is hardly cultivated except by large agriculturists; it can give splendid results and help a man on wonderfully, but can also bring him to ruin in no time, with the most unsettled of weathers!

Important as the fertility of the soil and the ways of working it may be, it is not the only thing: a good harvest depends very much on the weather, and this is so very uncertain that an agriculturist's head may have ample time to turn grey between Lady-Day and Michaelmas, St. George and St. Demetre, as to whether

it will rain in time, or if it will stop raining in time, or if there will be no hail storms; troubles from which, in fact, nothing can distract his anxious mind, except the hardness and pressure of the work itself. The care-worn mind of the poor agriculturist, always on the look-out for future events, has invented a number of prognostics, in which not only the moon but all nature takes a part. When the sparrows flutter about chirruping; when the cattle make a row and the forest is astir with sound; when the cock crows all day long, the ducks beat the ground with their wings, and the frogs keep up their croaking concert; when the mist rises, the sun sets in a cloud, and your ears itch, there will surely be rain. When, on the other hand, the setting sun "looks behind," gilding the sides of the hill he rose from, when the sparrows take a bath in the dust, when the storks stand quietly in the field, the lambs gambol gaily about, and the cat after washing her face with her paw looks at the door, there will be fine weather. But when the sparrows are hurrying about, looking for a shelter under the roof, when the lark dashes unheedingly at the window, when cattle bellow, looking up into the air, and the pig goes about with a straw blade in his snout, then a storm is threatening. And many other are the weather prognostics, and what is still more bewildering than their number is that they are often contradictory. But then there are means of influencing the weather, some of which have already been alluded to, as the Paparude, the Caloian, the witcheries of the Solomonari; in some places, the interment of a doll at a crossing is supposed to stop the rain, or again, the tossing down into a well of a holy image, stolen out of a church or house. Besides, from *Joi-mari* (Thursday before Easter) until *Ispas* (Ascension Day), the women will never do any house work, such as spinning, sewing, or laundry work, on a Thursday, as it might either bring down hail, or else stop the rain and bring in a drought.

The uncertainty of the weather is thus the greatest drawback with Roumanian agriculture, and this has surely done much to work into the peasant's head the

belief that all depends only on God's will, and all is to be expected only from Him. Among the leading classes there is a talk of irrigation, and plantations of new woods, and systems of manuring and new methods of tillage being introduced, but all that is a matter of time, a long time to wait, and also a matter of capital, hardly ever available. Trials, however, are made on some private properties, and especially on the Crown dominions, whose chief object seems to be to become model-farms for the surrounding peasants to copy. Until the hoped-for progress has settled in, the Roumanian peasant will go on sticking to his traditional ways and methods, and will look to Heaven for rain and for sunshine, but will all the same firmly believe that the only possible work for him to do is agriculture. It is really wonderful to look at their faithfulness to the soil, at their unshaken loyalty to husbandry: hardly have they shut the doors of their empty barns in a bad year than they will unhesitatingly again begin to plough, to sow, to harrow, and so on, year after year, with their hopes and their fears always in the bosom of the earth. Beside the evils arising from unseasonable weather there are others. Mischievous insects there are, depositing their eggs in the sown fields in September; but then a good frosty winter will destroy them one and all—let alone that they are likely to have been eaten up by crows, which, however, from a blessing can become a curse, if they find no insects, destroying whole fields of corn and maize. Then dogs, in numerous free flocks about the villages, are great destroyers of maize in autumn, in which damage the badgers take their part in the vicinity of woods; the very sparrows become a nuisance to the corn grower, and nothing but the gentle swallow will help against the general damage—that is why peasant boys will tell you that it is no sin to kill a sparrow, but a very great one to harm a swallow. All these minor evils, however, are noticed by the husbandman only in bad years; at other times he will tell you, when God gives, there is plenty for all his beasts to feed upon, and for man to reap plentifully.

In all the minor branches of agriculture there is still much room for improvement: some of them only want reviving, as they seem only to be asleep, after having flourished in old times; others want downright development.

The Roumanian is not much of a gardener—so little, indeed, that vegetable gardens are called *bulgării*, being almost always kept by immigrant Bulgarians, who grow all the vegetables for the town's supply, the staple produce being melons, water and sugar melons, cucumbers, pimentos, cabbages, vegetable marrows, tomatoes, &c. Potatoes do not yet enjoy much favour with the Roumanian peasant as regular food, but seem to be gaining ground, nevertheless; they are grown in the *bulgării*, but still more are they sown between the maize, where also one can see no end of pumpkins creeping among the maize in all directions, and also haricot beans, which are grown in great quantities, being the staple food of the Roumanians in fasting times.

Vines are cultivated on an immense area, and there are places celebrated for wine in Transylvania, Valachia, and especially Moldavia; in good and plentiful years the wine comes down at such a rate that it is sold at fivepence the *vadra* (some fifteen litros—over three gallons), of course, not of the very best quality, yet such as splendidly suits the business of wine-dealers in the West of Europe! But vineyards are mostly near towns and belong to townspeople; there are vineyards round the villages, but few of these cultivated for trade; hardly ever will a peasant sell his wine. He makes a cask or two at the most, and just manages to get it drunk before frost comes on, as deep cellars are not a usual commodity in peasant households. In hilly regions they grow prunes, of which alcohol is made. The Valachian sort is celebrated under the name of *țuica*, a light, tasty drink, mostly used as an aperient, very agreeable if well made; but the peasants usually make it at home, and distillation is a rather complicated process, and the result is that what they get to drink is a horrid stuff compared

with the otherwise stronger Moldavian *rakiu*, and especially the good Moldavian wine.

In olden times the Roumanians used to be great honey producers, owing to the riches of flowers in the meadows, but since tillage has more and more encroached on the hayfields, and sugar mills have taken in hand the industry of the bees, this production has very much diminished; but there is a tendency to revive it.

Besides these agricultural occupations, others are being pushed more and more to the front. Mining is gradually opening as a new or renewed peasant industry; in Transylvania it is mostly by Roumanian peasants that the mines of salt, lead, iron, silver and gold are worked; in Free Roumania there are extensive petroleum fields, whose area is developed year by year farther; anthracite mines, worked by peasants also, and large salt mines, which, however, are almost entirely worked by criminals sentenced to hard labour.

Another trade once in great favour with the Roumanian peasant, but disappearing fast now with the multiplication of railway lines, is the carrying trade (*cărăuşia*, or *chiria*). Formerly endless strings of oxen-carts could be seen filing off slowly along the highways, carrying corn to Galatzi and Braila, the greatest ports on the Danube; the trade is now almost extinct, but it used to bring a fair income into the peasant's pocket. Even in the mountains the locomotive is striving hard to replace the patient ox, but the lines through the mountains being few as yet, we may still have the chance of coming across old-fashioned carriers. What they carry here is timber, in carts too, but still more in rafts (*plute*) which are not over safe, being made up only of the wood carried, and fastened together with ropes, more seldom with iron chains; these rafts are delightful to look at, as they slide arrow-like on the swift stream, but are apt to make you feel very uncomfortable, if you too happen to be upon one of them. Only, you soon get used to it. And then the scenery is so beautiful all about you, the way so smooth; the able *cîrmaciŭ* in front and the trustworthy *dălcăuş* steering behind look so very

wise and competent, that you entirely forget you are gliding on Death's slippery back. It is not at all rare to hear of unfortunate accidents in connection with rafts, but the news of them does not spread far, and, even in the place, they do not stop for one moment the busy course of the other rafts.

The Roumanian is not a tradesman, except in so far as trade is connected with his own special pursuits, or with agriculture: if he has an industry, it is industry as a direct branch of agriculture; if he has a business, it is only to sell his own agricultural goods, and these he hardly ever sells except on the spot. In the neighbourhood of towns, the peasants sometimes go in with a cart-load of firewood, eggs, or milk produce, but town dealers are often too much for them, and on returning home at night they will find out that if they have not actually lost by trade, the day's labour and often also that of the oxen have gone for nothing; that is why they prefer to sell their wares for a trifle to the crafty Jew who comes out to meet them far beyond the town's barrier. But a market the peasant is always glad to go to is a fair (*iarmaroc*), where, beside traffic, there is a good supply of amusement too; fairs used to be great things with poor and rich some time ago, but they are falling more and more into disuse now.

But the Roumanian *is* a tradesman where he cannot call the soil his own, in the regions of the Pindus. A cheese trade was developed early; the Valachian cheese used to play so prominent a part in the commerce of Ragusa that it was used along with money as a standard of price. The price of the *caseus valachicus* (*caş* or *brenza*, called *brença* in a document of 1357) was regulated by the authorities. But the cheese trade was insufficient for Roumanian wants; they took to the carrying trade too, doing it by means of caravans; with their mountain nags, the Roumanian *chirigii* carried lead from Bosnia to Ragusa and took back salt in return; to-day still, many Roumanians are carriers. Very many of them, too, are innkeepers (*hangii*) and their (*hans*) inns are reputed by travellers to be the cleanest in the

country. Also industry is much more developed south of the Danube, where many Valachs are found to have settled in towns and undertaken various industries, especially metal work, at which they seem to be very clever, their filigrees being quite famous. They also are said to be particularly skilful at wood-carving.

The Roumanian of the Carpathians, always master of the soil, has kept to the working of it; that is why commerce has been left for foreigners to take in hand. Among the ruling classes there is much talk in Free Roumania of developing industry for the benefit of the people—they had better care about all the development that could still be given to agriculture, for, poor as the Roumanian peasant is, he is still at a great advantage compared to his brother in Western industrial countries; he has at least fresh air to live in and work in, and splendid nature to look at, which benefits are denied the workman in the mill, and must make a very great difference to their bodies and minds. Thank God, up to now we have only a few mills of paper, matches, rough cloth and sugar; if some profit is to be expected from them, it is only in a dim far-away future; up to now, they, or at least some of them, have only brought a great expense on Government for protecting them, and ridiculously high prices for paper and still more for sugar.

But the Roumanian peasant is a good deal of an industrialist in his own way. Almost everything about the house, with the house itself, is of his own make. I have seen peasants making their own stoves and manufacturing the very bricks for them. Among them, the ablest at one special work is sure to be applied to by the others in case of want; and so one always meets in a village with peasant artisans such as carpenters, wheelwrights, and so on, even bootmakers and cobblers. No doubt all these village industries can be enlarged and greatly improved, but it would be a great pity if this had the result of drawing the peasants into towns. The Roumanian does not dislike trade, he well appreciates it—

"Trade is a golden bracelet"*

* "Meşteşugul e brăţară de aur."

says a popular proverb; but he by far prefers agriculture, and there are trades that seem to thoroughly disagree with the Roumanian nature, the blacksmith, *e.g.*, is invariably a gipsy, so much so that "the gipsy" means just the same as "the blacksmith."

IV

But the great industrialist in a peasant household is the housewife. To begin with, all the household duties are in her hands, as the man does not interfere with them—never, at least, indoors; in the yard he may help her if he has a mind to, by splitting firewood or milking the cow, but everything else is the woman's business. And if she has a host of children, the elder ones will usually be of some help to the mother. From the early morning she has to set the house in order and to think of preparing the family's food. The house must be swept, after having been sprinkled with water to prevent the rising of dust. The rubbish is carefully thrown out on the rubbish heap, but on no account thrust carelessly into the sun's face, which it would stain, and then the sun would take his revenge by burning the crops, or in winter he may let loose the harness of frost, and bring perdition on man and beast. If she has possibly been too busy to sweep in the morning, she will do it in the evening, but then the rubbish is not to be taken out, but left behind the door till next morning, otherwise the cows would not come to their calves. She then gets food ready. Roumanian cookery is very elaborate, and there is a number of dishes a Roumanian peasant woman can cook if she only can afford it, but as a matter of fact, want will come to the rescue and make things ever so much easier. The plainest kind of food, the real national dish, is the *mămăliga* with *brânza* (cheese, sheep cheese). The *mămăliga* takes the place of bread, which is considered a luxury in a peasant's house; the *mămăliga* is always made fresh for each meal and eaten warm; cold *mămăliga* can be eaten too,

but if a fire is at hand, it is cut into slices and fried on the embers. Also a baked bread can be made of Indian meal, called *malai*, very tasty and sweet. Dishes of herbs and vegetables, and of fowl and fish, are very numerous; meat is rarely used. In summer the meals are mostly taken in the field, beside the work. After the husband's departure for the field, the wife will put the prepared food in pots, earthen pans, and clean napkins; the dry sort is put in a bag, which she usually rests on her back, with the sling aslant her head, the pots with juicy food which ought not to be upset she carries in her right hand in a bundle, the left being often occupied by the baby, and thus loaded she will walk to the field where the husband is long since at work, and they break their fast, working afterwards, with food kept for the following meal, at midday. At home the meals are taken on a round low table on three legs, which usually stands against the wall in the tinda, and is spread in the middle of the room only for the meals. The family sits round as well as it can, on small stools, or anything handy about the room, a log or so, or kneeling on one knee often enough. In well-to-do *răzăshi* houses this table is set on the large bed, and the people, if few, will sit round, not exactly lying, but with outstretched legs, and the back leaning on cushions against the wall. No table-cloth is used, except on festival occasions. The table, of white wood, is milk-white with scrubbing; the *mămăliga* is turned out in the middle of it from the *ciaun* (iron round kettle for *mămăliga*) and stands like a golden cupola smoking there until everybody has sat down round the table. In the meanwhile the wife is careful to take off the fire the *pirostii*—iron tripod on which the ciaun has been boiling—otherwise she might also burn in hell's flames. If the *mămăliga* is furrowed with cracks, this means that an unexpected journey is at hand for some one of the household. The men, who usually go covered about the house, will take off their hats or bonnets when sitting down to eat; to eat covered would be a sin, for which "God would weep and the devil laugh." They all quietly make the sign of the cross.

Then the *mămăliga* is cut into slices, with a thread, carefully from upside down, and not the other way, as then the maize grows ear, and divided among the members of the family. The courses then come in, in a porringer (*strachina*), put in the middle of the table, from which every one helps himself with his own wooden spoon, or if there is not a spoon for each, several will help themselves in turn. The bill of fare will be as varied as means will permit: a chicken *borș*, a soup, wholesome and tasty—made with fermented meal in water, producing a somewhat sour, clear liquid, to be used for cooking the whole week round—some stewed fowl also, meat being very rare in villages. In winter, pork and mutton can be had: mutton only about the Dobragia. On fast-days, the *borsh* is prepared with herbs and all sorts of vegetables, of which also stews are made, like haricot-beans, beans, peas, lentils, beetroot, potatoes, cabbages—sour cabbages all the winter—pickles, and, in poorer households, the bill of fare will not often extend beyond a *mojdei*, bruised garlic, with salt and water—if vinegar can be added, it is considered a delicacy: also, raw onion with salt will easily constitute a dish, and I have seen shepherds on fast-days eat their *mămăliga* with plain fresh water from the pail. Fruit is used in stews, eaten also with *mămăliga*, as soon as it is ripe, and unfortunately also long before that time. When pouring out the food from the pot the housewife must never look into it to see if there is no more left at the bottom, but just try with a spoon; looking at the bottom of the pot brings poverty. Neither must a girl ever eat out of the pot, for then she will have rain at her wedding. The drink is the pail of water in some corner of the room, out of which everybody helps himself with a small pot (*ulcica*); the grown-up will also help themselves directly out of the pail. But no one ever drinks without tossing some drops out of the vessel, by blowing them over; these are for the dead.

Besides the feeding of her small or large family, the peasant wife has the care of her fowls, and ducks and geese, and turkeys, of which she generally rears large broods; if she can afford to eat them in the house—as

many of the well-to-do will—so much the better, but she will probably prefer to sell them, because of the chronic want of money.

With all this, the peasant wife has to keep herself and her family clean; on Saturday afternoon she is always at home, washing the linen, cleaning and scrubbing, to end at last with a thorough washing of children, husband and herself. The *lăutoare* (washing of the head) is universal on Saturday evening in every Roumanian household. And it is rare that a wife neglects her home duties; sarcasms would pour out upon her at the Sunday dance, in the indirect *strîgături* (shoutings of verses) which often have a really wholesome effect on village life. Among these, there are many aimed at lazy women, not because there are many lazy women, but because it is considered so great a shame for a woman to be lazy.

"Green leaf of a tulip,
How industrious my wife is:
She set the pot for the washing
And grass has grown underneath!"*

Besides the usual house work, the peasant woman does a large amount of field work too; no ploughing is done by her, nor mowing, but any other field work short of stacking the hay, which the men pretend is much beyond a woman's capacity, and for which even among themselves a special gift seems to be required. In mountainous districts, women do little field work, as there is not overmuch of it for men, and that is why they can do a much larger amount of house work; some of them, however, in certain places help in felling wood with the men.

But, as already said, the woman is the great industrialist of the peasantry, and she takes almost every trade

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* "Frunză verde ș'o lalea
Harnică-i nevasta mea;
A pus oala să se lea
Și-a crescut iarba sub ea!"

ab ovo. She works hemp and flax, up from the very seed. The man will only plough her piece of land for her, then she sows the hemp or lint seed; when the plant is ripe and dry, she takes it to the pool to put it "to melt," then brings it home and passes it through all the processes—bracking, combing, and spinning. The big loom is spread out in the principal room, or in the second best, to be then taken away and folded under the roof in spring. And all sorts of cloths are made of hemp by them, for everyday wear; of linen, and finer stuffs. They also weave much cotton stuff, the cotton being bought in town as prepared yarn; they make beautiful tissues, with varied patterns and elaborate stripes, very serviceable as tablecloths and napkins and towels, for which there is a large demand, even in towns, as they wear beautifully. The bleaching is done by the women, too, the cloth being repeatedly rinsed at the well and spread on the grass that the sun may do his part, whilst the women will patiently sit by with their distaff in their girdle, spinning.

The peasant woman grows silk—an industry that was universal once upon a time, but neglected of late, though now meeting with more demand and fresh encouragement. She only buys in town the silkworm-seed, then produces worms, on the best bed of the house, or if there is no room, then under the bed, on mulberry leaves, changed daily, and, if no invasion of ants breaks in to destroy them, they will produce a finer or coarser sort of silk, of yellow or white colour, which the women then spin on a pretty distaff in the shape of a bow. With silk they weave stuff for shifts and head-veils, sometimes wonderfully thin and beautiful, with stripes or delicate designs in white cotton.

She also works wool. After the sheep are shorn in spring the wool comes into the women's hands; after varied processes of washing, combing, spinning, the worsted, of various qualities, according to the thickness or sort of wool, is woven into all sorts of carpets, for the house and for sale, into blankets and thick stuffs, into coverlets and many articles of clothing, it being used in

the natural colour, or dyed, in as many colours as needed, by the women themselves. They weave their beautiful *catrinţas* with silver stripes or designs; they weave all their husbands' and all their household garments. The cloth for *sumane*, of white or brown worsted, is then carried to a *piua*, a fulling-mill, situated high up on some mountain stream; and the women in most of the places will do the carrying, too. The women about the Moldavian Dorna are examples of this. Some scores of years ago, when the intercourse along the river Bistritza was limited to narrow footpaths, one woman would generally undertake to carry the cloth of the whole village. The cloth was loaded on horses, who were then tied in a long string of a dozen perhaps, each with the bridle tied to the tail of the horse in front; she drove them along up-hill, step by step, singing all the time, interrupting herself only to urge the horses on, or rather making of that very incitement a refrain to her song:—

"Green leaf of a tulip,
Oh my poor heart
Has again begun to ache,
Deh, horse Deh!

And so hard does it ache
That I can ride no more,
Hee, uphill, Hee!

Neither ride nor walk can I,
As does a weak human being
Hee, boy, hee!"*

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* "Foaie verde şi-o lale
Saraca inima me
Iar o prins a mă dure
De, cal, de!

Ş'aşa mă doare de tare
De nu pociu merge calare
Hi, la deal, hi!

Nici calare, nici pe jos
Cum e omul păcătos
Hi, măi, hi!

And woe to the woman who is not industrious! Not only the husband may take it upon himself to correct her aziness, that does not count for much—

"An unbeaten woman is like an undressed mill"*—

but there will also be much teasing for her at the dance on Sunday, in the fearless *strîgături*, at which nobody dares to get angry, for fear of exposure; one for a lazy woman:—

"Since my mother's maidenhood,
I had two lots of yarn;
I set the cloth on the warper,
I don't know one or two years since.
Cloth, O cloth!
Become a foal,
And do run home to mother
And neigh that she may weave thee!"†

Then the lazy woman's calendar has been made up for her in more than one way, the most widely spread of which is the following:—

"Monday is (St.) Luney,
Tuesday, Macovey,
Wednesday I go to town,
Thursday I do the shopping,‡

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* "Femeia ne-bătută e ca moara ne-ferecată."

† "Din fetia mamei mele
Avui două torturele
Pusei pânza pe urzoi
Nu ştiu de un an ori doi.
Pânză, pânză!
Fă-te mânză
Şi te du la mam' acasă
Şi rinchează să te ţasă!"

‡ "Luni-i Luneĭ,
Marţi, Macovei,
Mercuri mă duc la târg,
Joi târguesc,

Friday I come home,
Saturday I will rest,
And Sunday, if the popa works,
I will work also." *

Sometimes, however, it appears that clever, cunning women will be able to take in their surroundings and by their ready wit cover their too little love of work. One story tells of a woman who, although married for some time, had spun no more than one single spindle of hemp yarn and carefully stored it up in the loft. If the husband ever hinted at anything like a want of industry on her part, it was not a mild scolding he got from her. Until one day he insisted on being shown the winter's work. The wife said the loft was full of spindles, and even offered to count them, and with this she lightly sprang to the opening of the loft, while the somewhat slower husband remained at the bottom of the ladder. She very dexterously showed him the one spindle a hundred times in succession, until he, very much confused, acknowledged that he had undeservedly suspected his wife, and that nothing more was wanted than a *râșchitor*, a hand reel, to make the yarn into skeins, and then to set it on the loom for weaving; so he set out for the wood, to cut the required reel. But the audacious woman took a shorter path thither, and from a hiding-place began to shout in a changed voice: "Whoever cuts reels, his wife dies!" (*Cine taie râșchitoare, femeia-i moare!*) at the hearing of which the fond husband returned home with empty hands. But the artful woman went the length of laughing at his credulity. Next day she played the same trick, but the third time it no more succeeded, as the husband was no longer imposed upon by the ominous shouting, and brought home the hand-reel. The deceitful woman was not at her wits' end, however. She just managed to make a skein with the one spindle she had, then, filling

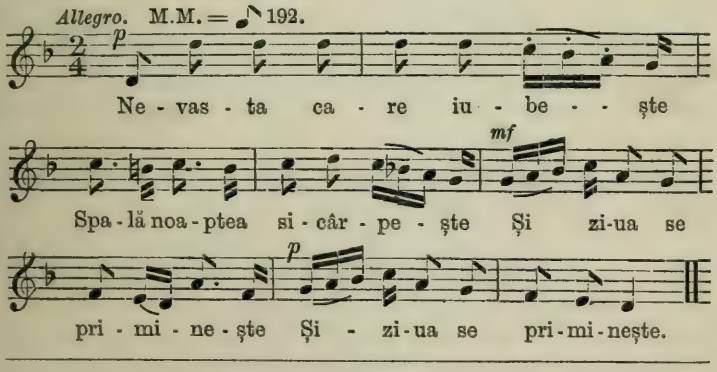
* Vineri mă 'ntorc acasă,
Sîmbătă mă odihnesc,
Și Duminică, dacă a lucra popa,
Oi lucra și eu."

a bucket with rough, uncombed hemp, set the kettle in the yard in order to boil the yarn, which must be done before weaving. On the top of the hemp, she placed the one skein, and then began to pour the boiling water on it. As she had—or pretended to have—some other work to attend to, she asked her husband to take care of the bucket for awhile, but, "Mind," she said, "let no crow by any means fly over the bucket, as if she does, all the yarn will turn into rough hemp inside." And so the man did, but he found it quite impossible to over-rule the high flying crows, and the unfortunate result was that on emptying the bucket there was nothing but rough hemp *călți* in it!

But the bold *flăcăi* (swains) at the *hora* would hear of it, and the too simple husband is not considered less answerable for the bad ways of his wife:—

"The wife who is in love
Washes and mends by night,
And changes her shift by day (bis).

If she sets to dance the *hora*
Her heart gets ablaze
And the dance she ever prolongs (bis).*



* "Nevasta care iubește
Spală noaptea și cârpește
Și ziua se primenește (bis).
La horă dacă se prinde
Inima i se aprinde
Și danțul mereu întinde (bis).

She jumps, straining the steps,
The children cry, she cares not,
Neither for house nor for table (bis).

But the husband, he, poor man,
Carries his load to the mill;
Devil take the two of them!" (bis).*

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* Sare pasurile 'ndeasă
Plâng copiii ei nu-i pasă
Nici de casă nici de masă (bis).

Iar barbatul el saracul
Cară la moară cu sacul
Pe-amândoi luă-i ar dracul!" (bis).

CHAPTER VI

THE PEASANT IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS

CUSTOMS AT BIRTHS, CHRISTENINGS, WEDDINGS, DEATHS

I

"A CHILD is a blessing in a man's house," goes the saying, and woe to the woman who has none: she will feel extremely unhappy, and will have to consult babas and submit to their incantations, and drink their herb-infusions, and leave no stone unturned to get into the blissful state of motherhood. Neither is *one* child the climax of happiness, for with one child the too fond parent has always an anxious heart whenever the slightest ailment appears; and if a parent were unfortunate enough to lose the one child, he will assure you that "one child is worse than none at all." The Roumanian peasant feels very comfortable with a houseful of children round him, and as a rule this is also the case; one hardly ever comes on a childless peasant's home. Unfortunately, though many children are born, it is no exaggeration to say, I am afraid, that no more than half of them are reared into men and women. The death-rate among small babies is great; in some parts, epidemics of diphtheria have almost become endemic; and if the sanitary arrangements are much beneath the mark for grown-up people, they are much more so for children. And if a Spartan breeding is by far preferable to the up-bringing of weaklings, on the other hand it is a great pity that so many children should be mowed down by preventable diseases.

A woman who expects a baby has many rules to observe and much advice to follow, and must do this, and not do that, and so on, until baby has seen daylight. And she is never to look at ugly things or beings, as the child is then in danger of resembling them; and not to steal things—as though that inclination were inherent to her actual state—for the image of the stolen object would appear on the body or face of the innocent offspring; and be careful not to yearn for things, or if so, have the yearning satisfied, or else miscarriage would be the fatal outcome of deprivation. When the moment of birth has come, great mystery must be observed, and the news must not be spread about, as then the birth would be a very painful one. If another woman happens to hear of it, she should come at once and with some shreds torn out of her garments, which she should burn, enshroud the invalid in smoke or besprinkle her with water from the mouth, or put her own finger-ring on the invalid's finger. But cases are frequent enough where the woman gives birth to her child with no attendance at all, and it is often born in the field where she has been labouring, and she brings it home in her lap; and as to going to bed, that is a luxury not many peasant women can afford.

As all over the world, the boy is much more welcome than the girl—apparently because his share in life is so much lighter than the girl's. If a baby happens to be born in a "shirt"—a kind of film in which he is wrapped—this means uncommon luck, and the film can be made into an irresistible talisman for success in life, if put through a good many preparations; at any rate, it is not thrown away, but spread on a bunch of sweet-basil, which plant plays so important a part in the Roumanian peasant's life. Immediately after the birth the baby is washed carefully in hot water—in which water if a white goose has been previously bathed, the child is made proof against any witchery—then swaddled tightly in his swaddling-clothes and put to sleep, not before there is made on its tiny forehead a *benchiŭ*, a small spot of white ashes, to ward off the

evil-eye. In some places about the Pindus, the Armîni are said to submit the new-born babe to the strong Spartan treatment of covering his little body all over with salt, and after leaving him no less than twelve hours in that pickling state, they wash it in hot water mixed with wine. However that may be, the bath-water of a baby is not thrown away carelessly after using, but is always poured carefully on a clean place, never beyond the house's shade, for fear of spilling it on the *ursite* (the fairies) who would then get very angry and bring bad luck on the child. Baby and mother have to wear something red about them, being both exceedingly liable to the evil-eye, which the red colour has the special power of keeping off. In some places the new-born baby is submitted to a prematurely long fast, being suckled for the first time only twenty-four hours after the birth, and then a sieve with bread in it is put on the mother's head during the suckling. When friends or relatives come to see her, she must not say a single word at their departure, or it would cause her milk to disappear; for that same reason, nothing is taken out of the house after sunset. Nor should the swaddling-clothes of the baby be left out after sunset, for then it would lose its sleep. At night, shutter or blinds should never be left open, lest the invalid should happen to see light in any other house; neither is it advisable ever to leave her alone before the christening of the baby, and, before going to bed, the looking-glass—if there is one in the room—should be covered, and the room smoked with incense. As soon as possible the priest is called in to read the prayers and make the *apa* or the *aghiasma* (the holy water). The little oil lamp (the *candela*) must burn for forty days running.

On the third day after the birth there takes place a great banquet (a *masă-mare*) in the house; the midwife goes around giving invitations, and friends and relatives all come bringing with them presents for mother and child. On that same day, after the banquet, a table is prepared with eatables, usually under the holy images, and everybody in the house goes early to bed that

night. The doors are locked and are not opened under any inducement, for that night the *ursitori*, called in other places about the Pindus the *Albele* (the white ones) and also the *trei mire* (the three fate-bringing fairies), come in and write down "the luck of the child," his chance in life; they must meet with fair welcome and be in no way disturbed in this most important act concerning the future of the child. In some places even the dogs are sent away to friends, that their bark may not disturb the fairies or frighten them away. Until the christening the child should on no account be left alone even for a moment, for the devil might come and take it away, putting in its stead some *soft* baby, which would remain so all its life; or a *strigoï* (a vampire) may also come in, and turn it into a *strigoï* too. If one were absolutely obliged to leave the baby alone, then a broom leant against it would do the office of keeping off danger. The baby ought never to be put to sleep with its face towards the moon, at least not until one year is out, for then it would become a *lunatic*, a sleep-walker, or at least would get thin. Neither must it be allowed to see its face in a looking-glass before it is three years old, as it then would be liable to get the falling sickness, *cade din afară*, as they call it.

The baby is laid in a small wooden trough (*albiuța*) —replaced by a larger one (an *albie*) as it grows—and rocked in it to sleep, either on the bed, or, oftener still, on the floor, in the house, or out of doors, wherever the mother is busy and, whenever she hears it crying she will manage to rock it with the foot, whilst with her hands she attends to her work. When the baby is lying in its trough it ought never to be stepped over, as this would prevent its growing tall. Until it is able to walk by itself, the mother keeps it ever at hand, if not always in her arms; and wherever she goes, to the field or in the village, to work or to amusement, the baby is always snugly nestled in her never-weary arms; the baby really wants none but the mother, at this early stage of its life. If it laughs in its sleep, it is an angel telling it its father is dead—and as baby understands nothing about its

father, it answers by its innocent, stupid laugh—but if the baby cries in sleep, it is that the angel has told it its mother has died, and it knows quite well what a mother means. A peasant mother is always fondling her little baby, and she may do anything with it except kiss it in the palm of its hand, for then it would grow into a thief; neither must she kiss it in the nape of the neck, for then it would disobey her and turn out badly. If the child does not walk in good time, it is supposed to be from fear, hesitation, want of courage in the child; the mother will then tie its feet together with a red thread, and putting it astride on the doorstep, will cut that thread with the hatchet, while another woman stands by asking, "What are you doing there?" "I am cutting off the baby's fear," answers the mother, and the child will walk very soon.

The christening takes place generally at the week's end after the birth, or not much later; the persons who have served as sponsors at the parents' wedding are generally sponsors for the child's baptism, too, or at least one of them, usually the godmother.

The baptism is celebrated at church, where the parents of the child do not go, or, if they do, they leave the church during the ceremony. Through the christening, not only the sponsor becomes a relation to the godchild and his parents—*cumătru* to the latter, *naş* to the former —but every person present becomes also a relative to the baby and to each other; they all become *cumătri*, and to a degree of relationship, too, that will make impossible any subsequent intermarriage between them. That is why very few people go to church to attend the baptismal ceremony. This is done by the priest in his robes plunging the naked baby thrice into a metal vessel full of cold water, head and all, at which it yells fiercely, and, redder than a lobster, is wrapped in the *crijma* (a piece of white linen), in the arms of the sponsor; the anointment with holy oils follows, and at last the baby is given Holy Communion—during which it ought to cry, and if it forgets to do so, the midwife will remind it of its duty with a smart pinch. All through the cere-

mony the godmother or father holds a big taper in the hand, trimmed with flowers, ribbons, fine tissues, whatever can be afforded. Taper and baby are carried back by the sponsor and handed over to the mother with congratulations and suitable good wishes. If the taper can be brought home burning, it means luck to the baby. The sponsor sticks the taper into white bread, that the child's heart may be pure, and that there may be abundance in the house.

Just as important as the christening is the next morning's bathing (*scăldătoarea*), when the holy oils are washed off the child. In this bath a few coins are dropped, to bring the new-born one riches, along with some bread, meant to bring him abundance, and some sweet-basil, which is to make him lovable.

As soon as possible after the baptism, if not on the very day, the parents must give a dinner, the *cumătria*, with as much rejoicing as possible, and rather than omit this they are very apt to run into debt. The sponsor then takes the head of the table; he and all the guests are expected to put on the table more or less money, according to means, which money should fairly cover the expenses of the dinner. Between godfather or mother, (*naș, nașă*), and godchild (*fin, fină*), a strong link of relationship has been established through the baptism; the former feel always obliged to protect and help the latter, while the latter is always supposed to ask advice from and pay some obedience to the former, and have for them as much respect as he is expected to have for his parents. On the second day of Easter, it is considered a great offence if the child's parents do not call with it on the *cumătri*, bringing them dutiful presents, a lamb, poultry, or at least the never failing red eggs and *pasca*.

If a mother has been unfortunate enough to see her children die one after the other, then the last new-born child is taken to church and deposited on the door-step; the future godmother is at hand: she pretends to just find it, and takes it to its mother, who, pretending not to recognise it, *adopts* it as her own. In some places the

child is given away through the window to some one who takes it and, bringing it to the door, sells it to the mother for a penny.

But so dreary is a childless house felt to be, that if a couple have no child of their own, or are unable to rear any, they will adopt one, take it "for the soul," *de suflet*—a *sufleţel*, a little soul, it is called. Moreover, the adoption of a strange child has often proved apt to bring about the desired blessing of a child. But adopted children have another drawback: although they may turn out to be good children in the end, this does not seem to be the rule, but rather the exception; and if as a last resource adoption is resorted to, it is oftener with distrust and anxiety than otherwise; one does not expect much genuine affection from an adopted child. A widely spread anecdote exists on this subject. A childless couple adopted a little boy and reared him into a full-grown man; by some particular bad luck—owing mostly to his own wish—the father came to be sentenced to death, although not in the least guilty in reality. He made his will, leaving half of his money to his adopted son, the other half to his executioner. But there was no hangman in that place, and so it was decided to fetch one from somewhere else; but the adopted son came and offered to hang his adoptive father himself. Yet dying without progeny seems to the Roumanian peasant such a misfortune that he will do anything rather than run the risk of dying alone, of having nobody to "shut his eyes," to take the responsibility of the rituals after death for the repose of his soul. That is the great question, the moment of death and the cares attached to it, and hence the great importance of children, beyond anything else. And mother and father are very anxious to see their children grow fast, in order to get help from them; and that comes soon enough, for the age of ten usually finds the boy, whip in hand, leading the oxen at the plough, and the girl with the (*furca*) the distaff thrust in her small girdle.

II

"Însuratul de tânăr
Și mâncatul de dimineață."
("Wed young, eat early.")

A boy and a girl are not accounted grown up before their first dance. *Joacă'n horă*, "she dances at the dance," is said of a girl who is a child no more. She is grown up now, with her fifteen or sixteen years of age; at home she works busily at her *zestrea* already, learning from her mother all the house-work and industry; at the dance, lavishly got up with flowers and ribbons on the head, and necklaces of beads round the neck, she already casts shy looks at the young men, whom she hardly used to take notice of until yesterday. But now they look very important, the *flăcăi* (the swains) and they also look conqueringly at the girls, and, ten to one, in more than one heart love has sprung up from the first dance. The slender figure, the charming looks, have done their work:—

"The young man is tall and slender,
As if he were drawn through a ring,
To love him at heart's content.
The fair one is tall and slender,
As though she were drawn through a bead,
To love her at heart's content."*

And love holds a large place in the Roumanian peasant life; it is the unavoidable companion of youth:—

"Tiny leaf of little hazel,
Whilst man is still young,†

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* "Badiu-i nalt și subțirel
Par' că-i tras printr' un inel
Să te tot iubești cu el!
Mândra-i naltă, subțirea
Par' că-i trasă prin mărgea
Să te tot iubești cu ea."

† "Frunzuliță de-alunel
Cât e omul tinerel

Yearning will sit by his side,
As th' ewe by her lamb.
But when man has grown old
Yearning will depart."*

Under the power of beauteous and bountiful nature, the splendid skies and the all-softening temperature of summer, the Roumanian peasant is much addicted to reverie; the newly aroused love will become absorbing yearning; and what the Roumanian peasant mostly sings is not love, *dragoste* (also *amor*), but this yearning, the *dor*:—

"Green leaf of three olives,
He who has no yearning on earth
May come to have some from me;
I have a yearning (big) as a spring
That will be enough for all."†

And he will go a long way to meet his love, and never spare time or rest:—

"He who has no love in the vale,
Knows not when the moon does rise,
Neither how long is the night.
He who has no love in the meadow
Does not know when the moon sets,
Nor how lengthy the night is!"‡

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* Şade dorul lângă el
Ca oiţa lângă miel
Dar când omu' mbătrâneşte
Dorul se călătoreşte."

† "Frunză verde trei alune
Cine n' are dor pe lume
Vie să-i dau de la mine;
Am un dor cât un isvor
Să le-ajungă tuturor."

‡ "Cine n' are dor pe vale,
Nu şti' luna când răsare
Şi noaptea câtu-i de mare;
Cine n' are dor pe luncă
Nu şti' luna când se culcă
Şi noaptea câtu-i de lungă!"

But if our lover is over-hasty, and ventures to proclaim himself a victor too soon, then he may easily "catch it," but will nevertheless sing merrily his own discomfiture—

"For a little bit of kissing
All night have I shivered;
When it came to kissing though,
A good slap I have got—
And, Lord, what a pity!" *

But once sure of her love, the young Roumanian peasant will faithfully cleave to her; no human power is able to draw him away:—

"Mother said she would drag me off,
From how many things, from all;
From two she won't be able to:
From the fair one and from death!" †

If, however, love was not returned—if the fair one were cruel and would not have him—the mother would do her best to soften his sorrow and cheer him up, but his heart is set on the *one* fair person, and no other will ever do:—

"'Dear mother's Georgie,
The village is large, girls are many,
And bigger and smaller ones
You have enough to choose from.' ‡

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* "Pentru 'n pic de sărutat
Toată noapte am tremurat;
Cînd a fost la sărutat
Bună palm' am capatat—
D'aleu, Doamne, ce pacat!"

† "Zis-a mama că m' a scoate
De la câte de la toate,
De la două nu mă poate:
De la mândra, de la moarte!"

‡ "'Dragu mamii Ghiţisor
Satu-i mare fete-s multe,
Şi mai mari şi mai mărunte
Ai de unde să-ţi alegi.'

'Wait, mother, and I'll tell you:
The sky is large, the stars are many,
Both large and smaller ones,
But like the moon
There is none!'"*

Or if the far-seeing or too ambitious mother would like another choice for him, he will hear no advice, and remains true to his fair one:—

"Oh, dear little mother mine,
Do you not see what I wish?
You are old and don't agree
The world is large, but you don't see
That from the hundred and thousand
One alone is there to please me!
The sky is large, the stars are many,
The bigger and also the smaller,
But as bright as they all are
They are not as fair as Litza!"†

And while the young man is passing through his pangs of joy or woe, the girl also will be singing her own love or yearning, attributing it at first to sweet-basil, the plant of love:—

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* 'Stăi, mamă, şi eu ţi-oiŭ spune:
Ceru-i mare stele-s multe,
Şi mai mari si mai mărunte,
Dar ca luna
Nu-i nici una!'"

† "Vai mămucă draga mea
Nu pricepi tu ce aş vrea?
Eşti bătrână şi nu crezi
Lumea-i largă şi nu vezi
Că din sută şi din mie
Numai una-mi place mie!
Ceru-i mare stele-s multe,
Şi mai mari şi mai mărunte,
Dar cât sânt de luminoase
Nu-s ca Liţa de frumoase!"

"Basil, may you never ripen,
And never have any seed,
For out of your little seed
Love has been squeezed out!"*

She won't give in easily to her new feeling; she will look after her work as before, but now and then fall back on her favourite thought, her feeling overmastering her little by little:—

"Over and over again asks my heart,
Do I feel happy or not?
And I say, I don't feel ill—
My tears run down in a rill!" †

And a time will come when work will fall into neglect; the love-stricken girl will forget all about it, and people will notice her absent-mindedness, and account for it:—

"The fair one walks up the hill
Spinning her silk
On the spindle she's put no thread
Looking upon a sky's cloud.
Curse upon thee, yearning!" ‡

An unhappy lover finds alleviation of his sorrow in nothing but singing, which together with sighing are his only solace, their weight depressing all Nature, too:—

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* "Busioace nu te-ai coace
Și sămânță n' ai mai face
Că din sămincioara ta
S'a scociorât dragostea!"

† "Mult mă 'ntreabă inima
Bine mi-i mie ori ba?
Și eu zic că nu mi-i rău—
Lacrimele-mi curg pârău!"

‡ "Suie mândra pe colnic
Răsucind la burăngic
Și pe fus n'a pus nimic
Pe cer cătând dup' un nor.
Bată-te pustia, dor!"

"For my very heavy sighs
The sun himself does not rise,
Nor has the moon any light,
No flower grows on the field!" *

And—

"Whoever invented the sigh
Forgive him, O God, his sins!
For if only man can sigh
His heart becomes lighter." †

But happy, mutual love, far from putting a stop to singing, takes the whole of Nature into the concert.

"Green leaf of little apple,
Down there by the spring
Love meets with love,
And so beautiful they sing
That all the herbs lie down.
And the glades do rustle
And the leaves do shiver
And the birds gather together
Listening to the songs." ‡

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* "De oftat ce-am oftat tare
Nici soarele nu răsare
Nici luna lumină n'are
Nici pe câmp nu crește-o floare!"

† "Cui a stârnit oftatul
Iartă-i doamne pacatul
Că omul dacă oftează
Inima-și mai ușurează."

‡ "Foaie verde merișor
Colo'n vale la isvor
Se' ntâlnește dor cu dor
Ș'așa cântă de frumos
Toată iarba culcă jos.
Și huesc poienile
Și tremură frunzele
Și se strâng paserile
S'asculte cântările."

And the lovers mean to be faithful too, for—

"Who is a man and wants to know
Love is not a mere estate
That you may take it on lease." *

Quarrels may ensue between lovers, often the outcome of intriguing from outside or the result of jealousy and diffidence; then the lover will sing in vexation:—

"Green leaf of a tulip,
The fair one went by on the causeway
As if unaware of me;
But what business have I (with her)?
Let her pass
And let her choose
Let her choose out of a thousand,
Only that he be like me
In the eyes and in the eye-brows,
In the mouth and in the eye-lashes,
And also in my love-making." †

Or the fretful fair one may take the strain:—

"Do not fancy, master, fancy,
That like you there are none.
Like you there are a thousand
Only I do not want them!" ‡

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* "Cine-i om şi vra să ştie
Dragostea nu e moşie
Ca să mi-o iei cu chirie."

† "Frunză verde de lalea,
Trecea mândra pe şuşea
Par' că nici nu mă vedea;
Dar ce treabă am cu ea?
Las 'să treacă
Să-şi aleagă
Să-şi aleagă dintr 'o mie,
Numai să-mi semene mie
Şi la ochi şi la sprincene,
Şi la gură şi la gene
Şi la dragostile mele."

‡ "Nu gândi badeo, gândi
Că ca tine n'or mai fi.
Ca tine sânt şi o mie
Numai nu-mi trebue mie."

where vexed love pierces so charmingly through would-be contempt. But at last quarrels are made up again, and misunderstanding finds a ready excuse :—

"Green leaf of walnut wood,
Have you seen, O ever seen
A high hedge without a shade,
A fair maid without a trouble?
Have you seen, O ever seen
Any high fence without props
A handsome man without faults?" *

And now, when a suitor offers for the girl, it is the parents' right to choose for her, and her own taste is consulted only last of all. Traditional duty for a young girl is to look down modestly, and answer in matters of love as in anything else : "As father and mother wish!" As a matter of fact, however, the girl is usually a good deal spoilt by her father, and if both parents are not always ready to give in to her wishes, as far as taking an undeserving man goes, they hardly ever will oblige her to marry against her inclination. In cases of wealthy suitors, they will advise her strongly not to turn her back upon fortune, but she will protest just as strongly against the disagreeable suitor :—

"Mother, the ugly one asks me,
Don't give me against my liking;
I am a girl—I am not earth,
I feel dislike to the ugly!" †

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* "Frunză verde lemn de nuc
Mai văzut-aţi mai văzut
Gard înalt fără zaplaz
Puiŭ frumos fără nacaz?
Mai văzut-aţi, mai văzut
Gard înalt fără propele
Om frumos fără greşele?"

† "Mamă, urâtul mă cere,
Nu mă da fără placere;
Ca io-s fată nu-s pământ,
Nu mă 'ndemn după urât!"

All her life will be an endless suffering if she has married against her inclination, and to this death alone will put an end:—

"Black, O dear Lord, is the earth,
But still blacker is dislike—
From a man it will unman you,
You would sleep, and are not sleepy,
You would eat and are not hungry,
You just wither on your feet,
Like the flower of chicory.
Every disease has a cure,
But dislike finds none
Save only in the fir-plank
And a big stone at the head!" *

But alas, the heart's desire is not always to be had, and the fair one may sometimes have occasion sorrowfully to sing:—

"If only God had ordered
What you love to be your own,
There would be no evil on earth.
But then God has settled it that
The fair is to mate with the ugly
That she may have a worried life!" †

A young girl has no greater anxiety than as to what her future, her part in life, will be, and that is why

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* "Negru-i, Doamne, pământu
Da-i mai negru urâtu
Din om te face neom,
C'ai dormi şi nu ţi-i somn,
Ai mânca şi nu ţi-i foame,
Numai te uşti pe picioare,
Ca şi floarea de cicoare.
Toată boala are leac
Da urâtul n'are cap
Fără scândura de brad,
Ş'o piatră mare la cap."

† "De-ar fi lasat Dumnezeu
Ce iubeşti să fie-al tău
N'ar mai fi pe lume rău.
Dumnezeu a rânduit
Să iea mândruţa urât
Să aibă traiŭ năcăjit!"

repeatedly she will turn towards the Giver of all good gifts, and with ardent entreaties will she pray :—

"Do with me, Lord, what you like,
But give me not what I dislike!" *

Great is the anxiety of youth about the future, and many also are the means of scrutinising it. St. Andrew's Day, Christmas and Epiphany Eve, New Year, are, amongst all, the very best days for finding out the future and treating of love affairs. On such days girls will gather together, and sometimes boys will do the same, and try all sorts of methods in order to discover the fate reserved to them, especially and almost solely, in regard to love matters. Sweet-basil is an all-powerful plant in such dealings. A spray of sweet-basil, stolen from the priest's sprinkler at Christmas Eve, stuck under the eaves and left there through the night, will mean great good-luck if found next morning covered with white frost. Again, sweet-basil laid at the foot of a kerbstone, if found next morning covered with hoar frost, will signify marriage in the very same winter. Another foretelling plant is onion. Every girl takes one, and scooping out the middle, fills it with salt ; all the onions are set by the window till next morning—the girl who find most water in hers will have the best luck. A girl can also see her future husband in the looking-glass. After a complete fast of a whole day, at midnight she sets two looking-glasses face to face with four candles between. From the back of one of the looking-glasses she looks into the other without winking—after a while the "future" shows himself in the reflection of the looking-glass. But how many girls can afford *two* looking-glasses and so many candles? The poor girl has, however, a means of seeing her future husband : she thoroughly scours and sweeps the house, plasters the floor, makes her beautifully straight *brîe* round the hearth, and on the first cock's

* "Fă-mă, Doamne, ce mi-i face
Numai nu-mi da ce nu-mi place."

crow she looks intently at the door, broom in hand; the "future's" image will not tarry to appear in the doorway. If her heart is already set on some flăcău, she will take two pig's bristles, one personating herself, the other the beloved swain, and after carefully sweeping the ashes from the hot hearth, she lays the two bristles side by side. If they curl towards each other, she will have him; if the hairs curve away from each other, she must give up all hope about him. Various means there are also for seeing the "future" in one's dreams, which are used on these special holy days.

And there are many incantations in verse and prose, by which skilful babas will help a girl or a young man in their love affairs; and illicit witchcraft is said to be sometimes used, to bring about an otherwise impossible wedding; and some people believe that an old witch is able to bring the sought-for lover astride on a rod, flying through the air—although all the stories I could gather on the subject related to remote times, when our grandfathers were young!

At all events, whatever a girl's attractions may be, she should never be without sweet-basil; moreover, if she has been careful to grow her own "love-sweet-basil" (*busioc de dragoste*), she is quite sure of being irresistible. The love-basil is sown with the mouth on St. George's morning, and then watered daily with water brought in the mouth at dawn, until it comes out. A spray of this plant, thrust into the girdle or the hair of a favourite young man, is sure to bring him round in a short time. Another influential plant in love matters is the fern (*navalnic*), a herb apt to bring on a veritable invasion (*năvălire*) of lovers!

Although the popular saying goes:—

"As to marriage and out-at-elbows, no one shall complain"—*

so sure it is to come—yet it seems that the chief, the only aim in life for a young girl is no other than

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* "De măritat și de coate goale să nu se plângă nimene."

marriage. Indeed, an unmarried woman is hardly ever to be met with in the peasant class, and is also an extremely *rara avis* even among the upper classes; such are considered as rather ridiculous beings, and it is not at all rare that many a girl will marry without the slightest regard to her own heart or taste, in order merely to escape the ridicule of remaining an old maid, making a sacrifice of her soul and of her body to a foolish unjust prejudice.

Wealth undeniably plays its part in bringing about marriages:—

"Vineyard and land
Will marry the horror." *

Nevertheless, in the humble classes, love is much more taken into consideration, and be it imputed to incantations or not, will work its bewitching effect. One of the most popular songs to be heard among all the Roumanians, I am told, relates the struggle of love thus:—

1. Green leaf blade of mallows (bis)
Rise, O moon, the sooner, (bis)

2. To light up the meadow, that (bis)
I may mow wormwood and herb,
For the fair one to untie me.

3. Undo, dear, what you have done (bis)
And do let me free to go,
And I'll give you a full piaster.†

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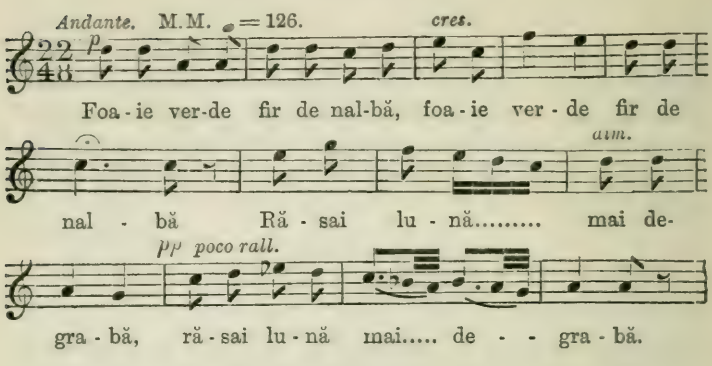
* "Viea şi moşiea
Mărită urgiea."

† 1. "Foaie verde fir de nalbă (bis)
Răsai lună mai degrabă (bis)

2. Să se vadă în livadă (bis)
Să cosăsc pelin şi iarbă
Să dau puicăi să-mi desfacă.

3. Desfă puică, ce-ai făcut (bis)
Şi-mi dă drumul să mă duc
Că ţi oiŭ da un leu bătut.

4. You may give even ten piasters (bis)
I did not do this for you to die
But for you to wed me." *



III

"Until he is twenty years of age, a young man is married by his parents; until twenty-five, he marries of his own free will; between twenty-five and forty the babas marry him, but after thirty the devil alone will do it!"

"Marry young," was the old formula when the parents were in a great hurry, as soon as they had a marriageable boy or girl, to "send them to their own house" (*să-i deie la casa lor*). But this hasty usage seems to be losing ground as time goes on, with the increasing difficulties and responsibilities of family life; and this is so, especially with the regular army service, which calls every young man to draw lots at one-and-twenty, and go through his training as a soldier for five or, at least, three years. Not that the young men married by parents were always happy.

"Hush, cock, for father may get you married too!" †

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* 4. Batâr să-mi dai zece lei (bis)
Nu ţi-am făcut ca să piei
Ci ţi-am făcut să mă iei!"

† "Hâci, cucoş, că te însoară tata şi pe tine!"

is the vexed utterance of a very young husband as reported through tradition. Though the young people may fall in love with each other, or may arrange their own future, the wedding business itself is left in the hands of the parents. Generally, the son will declare his intentions to his mother first, who will then carefully break the news to the rather severe father, for whom the respect of children and wife is often mixed with awe. If he does not say no, then they will begin to scan the genealogical tree of both families to find out whether the young people are related to each other, which fact would be a serious impediment to marriage. The father will take his son apart and give him the advice of wisdom as to the step he is going to enter upon, and try to bring home to him all the responsibilities he is taking upon himself; then two respectable men of the village are sought after and entrusted with the charge of proposing to the girl's parents; they are called the *peţitori* or the *starosti* and they go *împeţit*, taking under their protection the young suitor. The *peţire* is done in more or less allegorical manner, according to region and people. At the entering of the *peţitori*, if the girl's father looks cheerful and puts another log on the burning fire, it is a sign that he is in good spirits and ready for the transaction; if, on the contrary, he smothers the fire, this means that he is not well disposed towards the suspected message, and that the *peţitori* will have hard work to get the best of him. At all events, formalism is strong here, and all the time he will look as if he knew absolutely nothing about the business of the visitors until these have delivered the proposal, which consists in a more or less allegorical speech in prose or verse, often preceded by an introductory tale of a biblical nature. The father of the girl will generally pretend that he is not prepared, that he has not thought of marrying his daughter yet, that the dowry is not ready, and thus suggest all sorts of lame impediments. But the *peţitori* will insist, alleging that dowry is not the most important point, and that "for wedding and for death one is never ready," and so on. The man begins

to give in ; he will ask his wife's opinion too, but she will humbly answer that, of course, he knows best, and then some one will go in search of the girl to ask her opinion also, who, if she happen not to know the suitor beforehand—a case very rarely met with now—will be looking through some chink in the door, or from behind the oven, trying to make out what he is like. In the meanwhile the matter of the dowry is settled. How much land does the young man possess ; will he get the site for a house to be built on ; how many head of cattle ; even, how many suits of clothes has he? For the girl's dowry is made of all her handy work in the way of wool, hemp, flax, silk or cotton wefts, all carefully reckoned in yards, or, if she is rich, then only by rolls (*valuri*) of weft ; she will get cattle, oxen and cart, and, possibly, land also. The girl's parents are anxious to give their daughter as honourable a dowry as may be, in order to save her from possible gossip, of from still more possible censure from her future mother-in-law. When both parties declare themselves well pleased, a bottle of whisky is brought in for the *cinste* (the treat), everybody taking a draught in turn with suitable greetings, often followed by a short collation of a roasted hen or so, during the preparation of which the inclinations of the young people have once more been thoroughly tested, and a kind of promise has been made between them, by the girl giving the young man a handkerchief and receiving from him money.

A few days later the parents of the young girl will call on the young man's parents, to settle definitely about the wedding ; if they are living in another village they will drive in a cart drawn by oxen, in company with several relations or friends, the mother always on the alert for the good or bad omens they may meet with, and from which the happiness or bad luck of her daughter are to be augured. On their arrival, they are met at the gate, wide open for them ; fodder is given to the oxen, the visitors are asked in, and led on to indifferent talk on all sorts of topics except the burning one. Some of the men will walk out and just look round about the yard, to take in the real status of the man's wealth. The day of the betrothal (the *încredinţare* or *logodna*) is fixed.

On the betrothal day great preparations go on in the bride's house: thorough cleaning and scouring and baking and cooking. The friends have met, the *peţitori* arrive. Some man of reputed virtue and wisdom takes the two young people apart, and after a new recital of the catalogue of the evils, much more numerous than the pleasures, of married life, asks once more for their views, sure that they are quite decided upon the impending union. A plate of corn is brought in, mixed—in mountainous districts especially—with hemp-seed; the whole is spread over with salt, some lumps of sugar are added, to make life sweet, together with a few sprays of sweet-basil; the father adds some coins, and then the rings of the young people are hidden underneath. These turn round the plate and seek out each other's ring; outside rifle or pistol shots celebrate the happy event. The rings are put on the fourth finger of the left hand of the young betrothed by the old man. Musical assistance is called in—a fiddle and a lute at the least—and a dance is started, interrupted only by the supper, at which the most conspicuous dish is a roasted hen, which the bridegroom is to carve with his own hand, showing thus his ability, cleverness and spirit; to make more fun the hen is often sewn with strong thread, and brought in extremely hot. In such predicaments the bridegroom is very apt to show his temper if he has not good command of it! A young man is allowed to look silly and awkward in talk; this is rather expected from him, being youthful, and therefore shy; but if he is awkward with his hands, too, this would be matter of serious consideration for the bride's parents.

At parting the bridegroom's party pretend to take away the bride, and in some parts she really *is* taken away, and stays with the bridegroom and his family till the wedding. In most places, however, the taking away is a mere pretence, after which she is left to go home with her parents, but still under the protection of some trusted man of her own party.

The time between betrothal and wedding—generally three weeks, because of the *strigări*, the banns to be

published on three consecutive Sundays or holidays at church—is spent in preparations, cutting out, sewing, washing, baking, &c. The girls who help will make up the bride's *cortège*—they are *druşte*. The *nuni* (the sponsors) are then looked for; if possible, the godfather and godmother of one of the two young people—four sponsors are very rare. They are called upon with presents and begged to crown (*să cunune*), that is to say, to be sponsors for the young couple, to which they usually willingly consent, considering it a duty as well as an honour. The documents are prepared at the mayor's in the meantime, which, although it is legally the most important part of the marriage, is looked upon by the peasants as a mere formality, binding to nothing. The band is engaged, for no wedding could ever be thought of without music and dancing; the necessary shoppings are made at the nearest town. The bridegroom then appoints his train, of which the most important figures are the *vornicei* or *conacari*, or else *colacari*, the leaders of the dance, the representatives of the bridegroom, the smartest among the young men in the village.

The wedding itself lasts not less than three days—in old times boïars' weddings used to last seven days—and is usually celebrated in autumn when the wine is in, but may also be carried out in spring or winter; summer would seem to be a quite improper time, being the great labour season. The only suitable days for a wedding are Sunday and Thursday, the latter, however, mostly for second marriages. Practically, the wedding business begins on the Thursday before the appointed Sunday, when the baking preparations are begun, for there is a lot of bread, and *colaci*, and *malai* to be got ready for the wedding dinner and other meals. The very grinding of the corn, the bolting of the flour, the kneading of the dough, and putting it into the oven, are done according to prescribed rules—not like any other ordinary baking affair—but with much cheerfulness and fun, and very varied rules, according to the longitude and latitude from Carpathian to Pindus.

On Saturday the real wedding is entered upon. On Saturday morning, in some parts, the bride and her *druste* will walk out to the wood and bring home flowers which are set in water to keep fresh. In the middle of the room a table is laid with a clean tablecloth on it; in the middle of the table four big *colaci* are set on top of each other, with a lump of salt in the hollow middle wrapped in a handkerchief, meant to be given by the bride to the bridegroom, but which then is given back by him to the bride after the *coronation*, the wedding, and which she carefully lays by at the bottom of her box, to be taken out again only to cover her face when she is dead. These things ready, the flowers are then attended to, twisted together in a garland, a *cunună*, with a fine penny piece at each of the four sides, and then set on the head of the bride, who will thus wait for the bridegroom.

In the meanwhile, on the same Saturday, at the bridegroom's house cooking is going on too; his friends come with music; he is seated on a chair in the middle of the room, where his toilet is attended to: he is shaved, his hair trimmed and combed, while his mother and sisters are crying as bitterly as they can. He puts on his best suit, and then with his party starts for the bride's house, often one of his party carrying a small pine-tree adorned with gilt paper and fruit. Some women (*călțunăresele*) carry the presents for the bride. If the bride lives in another village, the men will ride, the women drive. At the other end they meet with the bride's party of men, on horseback too, and a race will take place between both parties. "When there is to be a wedding, the horses weep three days beforehand," and good reason they have to.

When the bridegroom's party arrives at the bride's house the yard is packed with people; the *vornicel* is stopped at the gate or at the door, where he delivers his rhymed speech—his *oraţie* or *conăcărie*. These *conăcării* or *oraţii* are very varied and usually of considerable length; the following is one of the simplest:—

"'Good-day to this honoured gathering,
And to the honoured parents-in-law!
How do you do?
How are you?'
'Thank God we are well.'
'But please to deliver your errand.
What are you looking for here?'
'What we are coming for
And what we are seeking
Right will we tell you,
For we have fear of nobody.
Where we are coming from
We know,
And where we are going to
Also.
For we are imperial messengers,
Good men, godly men,
And we have imperial orders
To be stopped by nobody.
Hence, you are requested
To listen attentively
While we speak
And deliver our message.*

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* "'Buna vremea la cinstita adunare
Şi la cinstiţi socri mari
Cum trăiţi
Cum vă aflaţi?
'Mila Domnului, ne aflăm bine.'
Dar şi D-voastră samă să vă daţi
'Pe la noi ce căutaţi?
'Noi ce umblăm
Şi ce căutăm
Samă bine ne vom da,
Frică nimărui nu purtăm.
De unde venim,
Ştim
Şi unde mergem
Cunoaştem,
Că noi sântem soli împărăteşti
Oameni buni, dumnezeieşti
Şi avem poruncă' mpărătească
Nime să nu ne oprească.
Deci D-voastră sânteţi rugaţi.
Bine să ne ascultati
Când om cuvînta
Şi sama ne om da.

Our young emperor
Summoned us one evening
And gave us the following order:
"Mind you, gather troops and braves,
With hatchets, and big and small,
And I wish to go hunting
After yellow little birds
And tame little does!"
We all submitted,
And a-hunting we went.
But towards evening the emperor
Noticed a light foot-print
Of a nimble fawn;
Some said
It was the track of a paradise bird
For our emperor's happy life;
Others said
It was the trace of a fairy,
To be the emperor's garden
Full of beautiful fruit.
Then the fair emperor
In golden stirrup he rose;
Upon his fine host he looked *

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* Al nostru tânăr împarat
De cu sară ne-a chemat
Şi această poruncă ne-a dat:
"Să strângeţi cete de voinici
Cu topoare mari şi mici,
Ca să fac o vînătoare
De paseri gălbioare
De blânde căprioare!"
Noi cu toţii ne-am supus,
La vânătoare ne-am dus.
Iar împaratul în desară
Zări o urmă uşoară
De sprintenă fieară.
Unii ziseră
Că-i urmă de pasere de raiŭ;
Să fie împaratului de bun traiŭ;
Alţii ziseră
Că-i urmă de zină,
Să fie împaratului grădină
De frumoase roduri plină.
Atunci mândrul nostru 'mparat
In scări de aur s'a râdicat,
Peste mândra-i oaste a catat

And said:
"Who will be able
To hunt up a fawn
And track her on her trail,
And then to bring an answer?"
Then we sorted ourselves
And started on the spot
From track to track
Like a herdsman after a flock;
And coming, we three braves,
And arriving in this place,
With the breath of the wind
Over the face of the earth
We saw falling on a house
A fine and bright star;
We saw also a little flower
Finer even than the star
Which blossoms with the flowers
But which bears no fruit.
Our emperor wants her
And has sent us after her
To bring her to him as bride
To make her his empress.'" *

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* Şi a zis:
"'Cine-a fi 'n stare
Să prindă o fiară
Şi pe urmă -i să se ducă
Şi răspuns apoi s' aducă?'
Atunci noi ne-am ales
Şi de loc am purces,
Din urmă 'n urmă
Ca păstorul după turmă;
Şi viind noi trei voinici
Şi ajungând până aici,
Cu suflarea vântului
Pe fata pământului,
Am zărit căzând pe-o casă
O stea mândră, luminoasă;
Ş'am mai văzut o floricea
Mai mândră decât o stea,
Care în flori înfloreşte
Dar de rodit nu rodeşte.
Imparatul nostru o vrea
Şi ne-a trimes după ea,
Ca să i-o aducem mireasă
Să şi-o facă împărătească.'"

During the *oraţia* the bride is surrounded by her *druşte*, having a pail of water and a big *colac* beside her. At the end she will take the pail and gracefully pour away the water round her, besprinkling with as much spirit as she can the young men round her; she breaks the *colac* and distributes it all round. Fine handkerchiefs are tied to the horses' bridles, and one of the bride's *vornicei* joining the party, they return to the bridegroom, who now puts together the presents for the bride in a bolter, and covering them with a fine napkin, sends them to her by the *vornicel* and suite again. The handing over of the presents is again accompanied by a long recital, *închinare*, with enumeration of the presents which, the *vornicel* pretends, the bridegroom has gone to fetch from Constantinople, and after shipwreck and no end of troubles has at last succeeded in bringing them.

When the bride puts out her hand to take the offered presents, the *vornicel* swiftly draws them back, in order to tease her a little, and make the company laugh at her expense:—

"Wait a bit,
Lady bride,
Do not be in a hurry with taking
As you have been with wedding,
Although sir bridegroom too
Has been over-hasty to wed you
For fear another might get you!

Well now, please
Put out your hand *

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* "Ia mai îngădue
Jupâneasă mireasă:
Nu te grăbi cu luatul
Cum te-ai grăbit cu măritatul,
Cu toate că si jupân mirele
S'a prea grăbit cu însuratul
Ca să nu te-apuce altul!

Ei, poftim acuma,
Pune mâna,

And take them heartily
And look somewhat more cheerfully,
For you have to set off to your own house!"*

The presents are tendered, and passed on from hand to hand. Now the turn of the bride has come; she gives the presents for the bridegroom to her own *vornicel*, who, followed by his suite, carries them to the bridegroom, to whom he also offers them with the recitation of the due *închinare*. Here, the refreshments served are wine and whisky.

Upon the arrival of dinner-time, the bridegroom and party are invited to the bride's house. They come dancing, the dance being led by the *vornicel* who, besides other accomplishments, must be a first-rate dancer. Whilst these are approaching, the bride's party also organise a dance, disposed in such a way that all the entrances of the house are guarded, the young men clasping each others' hands so that nobody can break in. The two parties dance face to face, each of the two leading *vornicei* doing his best to deceive the other, and by some stratagem to master the field. If not successful by dance and cunning in undoing one another, they will try fair fighting, but when neither succeeds, the sponsor of the bridegroom (the *nunul-mare*) pays a fee to the bride's party and they are all let in.

After dinner the cart with four oxen is driven to the front door to be loaded with the *zestrea* (the dowry), the *trousseau*. A trunk or two, full of all sorts of linen, of towels, napkins, tablecloths, and under-garments, then carpets, rugs, pillows, &c. After much struggle and dance, and wear and tear, the things are carried out to the sound of the untiring music. But when it comes to the trunks two of the bride's party will stand at the door and stick their knives crosswise in the door-posts and never allow them to cross over the threshold unless the *nunul-mare* has paid a fee. In some place the dowry

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* Şi primeşte cu toată inima
Şi cată mai voioasă
C'ai plecat spre a d-tale casă!"

is taken to the bridegroom's house only on Sunday morning. After the cart with the bride's belongings has driven aside from the door, seats are put out for the parents and nearest relatives, and carpets are spread in front, on which the young pair have to kneel down, to ask the parental blessing before setting out; whilst they do it, a *vornicel* stands on their right and pronounces a recitation of forgiveness, a long piece of verse, in which he begins from the very creation to explain that man may sin, that youths are apt to make mistakes, but that parents must forgive. Whisky is handed round, and, as the couple and their friends set out, the musicians will sing:—

"Be quiet, bride, and cry no more,
For to thy mother I'll bring thee
When the poplar will bear apples
And the willow egriots." *

At which song, if the bride had no mind to cry before, she is sure to begin now. But a bride always cries; it would be very improper if she did not; it would be unlucky. She steps into the cart or on horseback, and the whole party starts for the bridegroom's house, where again various formalities are accomplished for the reception of the bride. The *zestrea* is brought in, with dancing again, while the musicians sing merry, humorous songs to the *soacra-mare* (the bridegroom's mother) to predict for her all the troubles her daughter-in-law is to bring upon her, and also foretelling to the bride dreadful things at the hands of her future husband. They sit down to dinner in due order; afterwards, some of the guests go out to dance in the yard, while the rest remain in the house to get the *peteala* (the gold-thread) ready, by arranging it in long, thin skeins, to be put on the bride's head, and hang streaming down her back. All the time

* "Taci mireasă, nu mai plânge,
Că la maică-ta te-oiŭ duce
Când a face plopul mere
Şi răchita vişinele."

the music goes on with songs, partly sad, partly merry. All Saturday night they dance and amuse themselves at the bridegroom's house; at dawn they all go home to sleep for an hour or so, and on Sunday morning they again gather to make the preparations for church.

On Sunday morning the party assembles early at the bridegroom's house; one of them says the Lord's Prayer, then they set out to fetch the sponsors. There the *nuna-mare* adorns with flowers two big white wax tapers, usually with roses, white and pink; she hands one to her husband, keeping the other for herself, and amid greetings and shouts of "Good luck" and "In a lucky hour" they all go to the bride's house, where the scene of the betrothal is repeated. The bride, ready dressed, is seated on a chair in the middle of the room; the *nuna* will now comb her hair, part it in two and make two plaits of it, arranging them in a coronet on top of her head, on which then the gold-thread and the orange flowers are fastened, together with a silver coin hidden in the hair, that she may never be in want. The bride ought to weep all through the operation. A little bunch of flowers and gold-thread is put on the bridegroom's hat and also in the hair of the *druşte*. One big *colac* is then broken and divided among the people present, and then, in ox-carts and horse-vehicles and also on horseback, they will start for church to the sound of music and pistol shots. A bride ought never to meet another bride on her way to church, it would be a very bad omen; but it would be a very good omen if she met with a funeral. At church they go through a ceremony of honouring the chief images, then the pair receive Holy Communion and the ceremony of the "coronation" is gone through, the sponsors standing by the young pair with lighted tapers in their hands. The priest reads the usual prayers and admonitions to the young pair with the never forgotten: "And the wife shall fear her husband," on which a too cheerful old priest will add: "And the husband the poker." Two crowns, made of flowers or of metal, are put on the head of the married couple by the priest, aided by the sponsors, after which the married

couple, sponsors and priest, will join hands and turn thrice round the table while the priest sings: "Jessaiah dances," whilst one of the party will shower upon them sweets, raisins, and hazel-nuts. At this moment, if the bride wishes to have the upper hand at home, she ought to tread on the bridegroom's foot. The couple are then given some bread, and drink some wine out of the same glass, the priest and party congratulate them and the *cununia* (the coronation) is over. Of course the wedding at the mayor's has been gone through before the church coronation, but without any particular ceremony. At the bridegroom's house—the couple's house henceforth—the bride is received with carpets spread on the door-step by the mother-in-law, who kisses her, while the *lăutari* will play and playfully sing—

"Mother-in-law
Sour grapes
You may ripen
Ever so much
You will never become sweet." *

A plate with bread and salt is offered to the young couple, often also with honey and butter. The bride takes some butter with the finger and anoints the door-frame crosswise. In some places the young pair are offered to eat with a needle a hard-boiled egg, in order that they should be thrifty, and attached to their house as the hen to her eggs. At dinner the priest will occupy the head of the table, or in his absence the sponsor; *colaci* are offered round in due order, with appropriate recitations of *închinăciuni* and hearty cheerings.

Towards evening the dance breaks off, and only intimate friends and important persons are invited to the *masa-mare* (the great dinner). This meal takes place

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* "Soacră, soacră,
Poamă acră
De te-i coace
Cît te-i coace
Dulce tot nu te-i mai face!"

at night, and only married couples partake of it; the guests all pay for their place with as much money as they can afford; the sponsor is expected to give most, from £1 upwards; promises also may be made of cattle and sheep. Every guest is presented with a *colac* and a beautifully spun napkin, part of the bride's dowry. The courses brought in are many, and endless the toasting, with long speeches, cheerful music, and no end of practical jokes and mutual teasing. At dawn the table is left; the *nuna* puts out the wedding tapers which have been burning all the while, stuck in a loaf, and gives them to the bride, who carefully lays them by, towards the time when she and her husband shall want them to light their last moments on this earth. If one of the tapers is burned out more than another, the owner of it will die first. The *nun* then takes the bride's handkerchief and puts in the collected money, with some bread and salt added for abundance' sake, and also some sweet-basil for love's sake. But he must not tie the bundle too tight, as the couple are then apt to become miserly, nor too loose, as they will then be spendthrifts.

On Monday morning a young woman is sent out with a red kerchief tied on a stick and a bottle of red whisky to ask friends for the evening dinner (the *uncrop*), when spirits are so high that men will get up on the top of the house to drink there, and amusement will go on all night again. On Tuesday a party goes with music to fetch the *nuna*, who begins again to dress the bride's head, putting on it the kerchief that she will always wear, so that the holy sun shall never again shine upon the married woman's bare head. On the next Sunday the young couple have to receive their relatives at dinner; the Sunday after they are entertained by the bride's parents, and there at last is the end of it.

Roumanian peasants, with all their faithfulness to old usages, are nevertheless often obliged to bring in changes more in accordance with outside circumstances, stronger indeed than their own wishes. As far as possible, they preserve all the formalities, local or general, but then want and pressure of work will often affect them,

shortening more and more all such amusements; in old times a wedding took more than three days; nowadays a tendency appears to crowd the various formalities as much as possible into Saturday and Sunday.

The Roumanian peasant—rather different from his compatriot of the upper class—has married for life; he and she are perfectly aware that—

"Marriage is an iron yoke
Your life long you are with it." *

Yet they will stick to it, and bear with one another all through the years. The multifarious shortcomings of life may well fill the weaker of the two with dejection, put forth in a song like this, begun before, ended after, the gleaming mirage of love and wedding, a song which sounds more like a yearning for past youth than for lost liberty:—

1. "Before being in love with thee,
Love, O my love,
Where I lay down I did sleep,
Love, O my love.

2. But since I have loved thee,
Love, O my love,
I can rest myself no more,
Love, O my love.†

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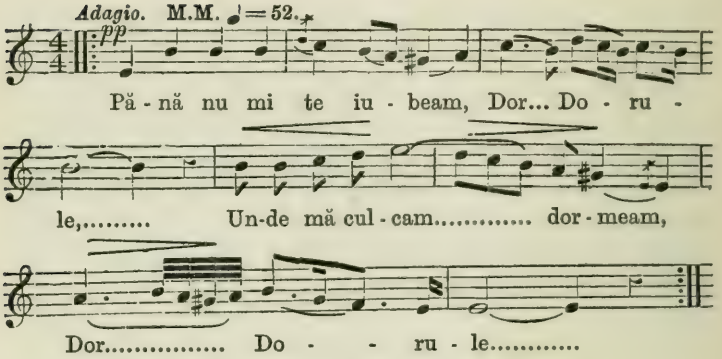
* "Măritatu-i jug de fier,
Până-i trăi ești cu el."

† 1. "Până nu mi te iubeam,
Dor, Dorule,
Unde mă culcam dormeam,
Dor, Dorule.

2. Dar de când mi te iubesc,
Dor, Dorule,
Nu pot să mă odihnesc,
Dor, Dorule.

3. As a maid in my mother's house,
Love, O my love,
I knew how a flower is worn,
Love, O my love,

4. But since I have been married,
Love, O my love,
The house's care I have taken,
Love, O my love." *



She may have still stronger reasons to draw a comparison between girlhood and married life and find the latter wanting, thus:—

"The well-being of my girlhood,
No penman can ever write it.
Even though the sky were paper,†

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* 3. Cât eram la maica fată,
Dor, Dorule,
Știeam floarea cum se poartă,
Dor, Dorule.

4. Dar de când m'am măritat,
Dor, Dorule,
Grija casei mi-am luat,
Dor, Dorule."

† "Binele meu din fetie
Nu-i diac să-l poată scrie.
Chiar de-ar fi cerul hârtie

And the moon were an inkstand,
The holy sun a young penman,
Ever writing in a small hand."*

For husbands are rather exacting, and wives have not always an easy time with them. Of course, as long as he keeps to language only, be it bad language even, it does not seem to matter overmuch, for—

"The husband may say many things,
The wife puts them behind her back."†

But, unfortunately, he will often come to blows, and not for very sufficient reasons, either. Even blows are not taken too unkindly, for—

"An unbeaten woman
Is like an undressed mill"—‡

and, "A man who does not beat his wife does not love her." It all depends, of course, on the causes of the beating, and if the wife has reasons to think that jealousy and love are at the bottom of her husband's cruelty, she will surely not take it unkindly; rather the reverse. Moreover, a Roumanian peasant woman would much rather be beaten, ever so much, by a strong husband, than possess one whom she could beat herself. The centuries-old *Vidra*, the wife of Stoïan, the ancestral type of the Roumanian woman, denies him the help he begs from her in his single fight with the *Păunaşul Codrilor*; she declines to tighten his girdle, loosened in the struggle, for she thinks it a cowardly thing that a man should ask help from a woman, especially in a single

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* Şi luna un călămăr
Sântul soare-un diecel
Să tot scrie mărunţel!"

† "Barbatu multe zice
Femeia la dos duce."

‡ "Femeia ne-bătută
Ca moara ne-ferecată."

fight. She is the prize of the victory, and she is ready to accept the victor, the bravest, strongest of the two :—

"O, no, no, dear brother man,
For you want a just fight—
And the one who is the victor
He it is that I shall love." *

And when the victorious Stoïan prepares to cut off her head in punishment for the denied service, she is not cowed in the least, but boldly and bravely holds her own :—

"So it is, O Stoïan, so!
I said, and say it again,
That I'll ever love a brave man
Who can fight his struggle out
Without asking woman's help." †

Alas, though, for that deplorable husband, unable to appreciate his noble wife's strength of character! He actually *cut* off her head, and made with it a top to a hay-stack! The Roumanian woman is still true to the ancestral taste; she always prefers a man of whom she proudly can say that he is "a cross of a man" (*cruce de barbat*), and then she will light-heartedly step behind him, on the road of life!

Unfortunately, domestic strife may be the outcome of vice, of drink, on the man's side mostly, but sometimes on both; then it may come to bloody tragedies, for the maddened drunkard will strike indiscriminately, and the hardened wife will still cross him and arouse his wild anger by: "Strike, for I am not made of glass to break!"

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* "Ba nu, nu, bădiță frate,
Că vrei luptă pe dreptate
Și ori-care a birui,
Eu cu dânsul m'oi iubi."

† "Așa-i Stoiene, așa!
Am mai zis-o ș'o mai zic
Că mi-i drag cine-i voinic
De se luptă făr' a cere
Ajutor de la muiere."

And he strikes! But cases of the kind are rare. Happy couples are frequent (much more so than in the upper classes) who patiently accept the hard conditions of life, and a wife will easily find it in her heart to sing after a departed husband:—

"Ever since my lord is gone
Mist has set in my courtyard,
On the stake and on the rod,
And on my own little heart."*

With strokes now and then, with rare petting and caressing, with frequent hardships and hard toil, they walk through life side by side, the peasant couple, and really there is still a subdued love in the still twinkling eyes of the shrunken *moşneag* (old man) when speaking of his old wrinkle-faced wife, of his *baba*. Love is, has been, a youthful dream, for which many allowances have been made in time, the conditions of which, however, will arouse the humour of the aged, to which he will give vent in a jocose *hora* like this:—

1. "'You have been, ma'm what you have,
And are only a poor lot now.'
'You have been, sir, a strong man,
And are now a good-for-nothing man.'

2. 'You had, madam, blooming cheeks,
Now you've wrinkles on your skin.'
'You have had, sir, steady eyes,
Have now your body on crutches.'†

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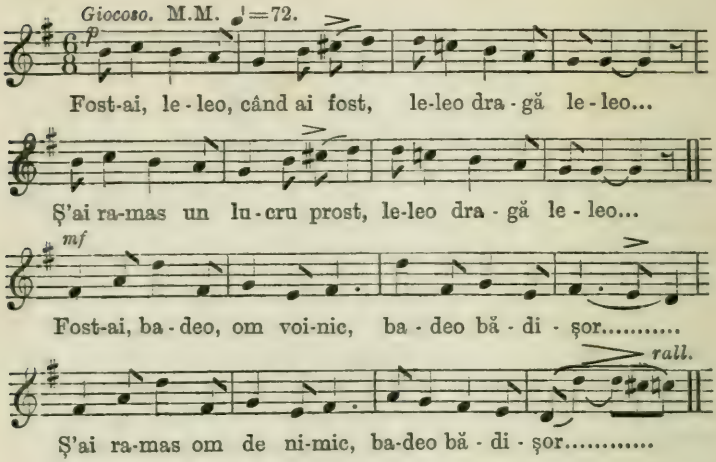
* "De când badea mi s'a dus
Negura 'n curte s'a pus;
Şi pe par si pe nuiea
Şi pe inimioara mea."

† 1. "'Fost-ai, leleo, când ai fost
Ş'ai ramas un lucru prost.'
'Fost-ai, badeo, om voinic
Ş'-ai ramas om de nimic.'

2. 'Avuşi, leleo, floricele,
Ş'acum ai sbârceli la piele;'
'Avuşi badeo ochii dârji
Ş'acum eşti cu trupu 'n cârji.'

3. 'You were, ma'm, full of attractions
Have remained with: Away, hence!'
'You were, sir, a sprightly man,
Have become quite a vampire!'"*



Divorces, very frequent in the upper classes, are hardly ever known among the peasants; very rarely indeed, happening only in cases when the wife has somehow reached town, taken domestic service, and got within reach of some lawyer's advice. Conjugal philosophy has come in the tolerant admission that—

"A man's home is heaven and hell as well."†

Consequently, one puts up with vexations for the sake of the happy moments, be they ever so scarce. For after all—

"As in a man's home, nowhere,"‡

for better for worse.

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* 3. 'Fost-ai, leleo, cu lipici
Ş'ai ramas cu fugi d'aici'
'Fost-ai, badeo, om vioiŭ
Ş'ai ramas chiar un strigoiŭ!'"

† "Casa omului şi raiŭ şi iad."

‡ "Ca la casa omului, nicăiri."

If the two are equally below the mark, then they have been "made by fate" for each other:—

"God has not spoiled two houses."*

But if one only seems to be made for the misfortune of the other, the proverb seems to admit that this is the usual state of things in this world; that a good useful being will be usually coupled with a bore, a disagreeable weight, it is generally—

"An ox and a bore;"†

and even the still more discouraging—

"Good grapes are eaten by pigs"—‡

seems to imply that couples are seldom fitly matched, and then one really does not know which it is best to be, the grapes or the pig!

About conjugal virtues there are many anecdotes and songs, tending, it would appear, to show that they are somewhat loose, the man does not much trust his wife:—

"Woman and dog, never believe them."§

Or again—

"Your horse and your wife never trust to another."‖

But the wife has her answer also—

"Husband and horse, never trust them: when they seem to go best, then you are overthrown."¶

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* "N'o stricat Dumnezeu două case."

† "Un bou și o belea."

‡ "Poama bună porcii o mânâncă."

§ "Femeia și cânele, să nu-i crezi."

‖ "Calul și femeia să nu-i dai pe mâna altuia."

¶ "Barbatul și calul să nu-i crezi: cînd îți pare că merge mai bine, atunci te trântește."

Of course, in this discussion about virtue, man has managed to put himself into a rather superior situation: Roumanian as well as other peasants will look down upon woman in general, and stamp her inferiority in everything by saying that woman is—

"Long skirts, short understanding,
Judgment rather small;
Bound head, girt heart,
Unreached by the mind."*

Anecdotes and proverbs and *strîgături*, verses shouted at the *hora*, are very severe, harping upon defective virtue in woman, but after all, will all this stir not rather tend to show that people feel keenly about it, that it is the exception rather than the rule, and that exactly because virtue is the groundwork of peasant society the departures from it arouse so much ado and talk? As a matter of fact, this seems to be one of the greatest drawbacks of Roumanian social life—is it not rather Latin?—that, for good and evil, there are more words than deeds. Gossip is strong in every social stratum and is apt to emphasise and develop facts, until they have quite reached the dominion of pure fancy. Popular wisdom has put it down in a few words:—

"Water, wind, and people's tongues,
You cannot stop."†

IV

"Man has nought else to think
But over and over will reckon
How he will live for ever.‡

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* "Poale lungi şi minte scurtă
Judecată mai măruntă.
Cap legat inimă' ncinsă
Şi de minte ne-cuprinsă."

† "Apa, vântul şi gura lumii
Nu poţi opri."

‡ "N'are omul ce gândi
Făr' mereu a socoti
Că în veci va tot trăi.

But the human life
Is like the field flower:
At dawn it will blossom,
Fade away at even." *

Happy, too, when time is given one to fade away, but *Death*, embodied in the shape of an emaciated old woman, does not choose in reaping her harvest, but cuts down indiscriminately old and young. And the will of God must be done, for He has given "man's days" and His is the right to cut them short when He likes. "Where there is life, there is also death"—*unde-i viață, este și moarte.* The Roumanian peasant looks quietly forward to death: "when his days are out," a man must go. But if death itself is looked upon with no special fear, the moment of death, the idea of crossing this world's threshold, is considered with some foreboding. An easy departure is the last happiness a man may wish for himself; what will happen after death is not so disquieting as the *manner* of the transition from the known life to the unknown one. Death is foretold by many an omen. If the dogs bark in a wailing tone and dig holes round the *prispa*, some one of the family will die; if the owl shrieks on the chimney top, if the oil lamp (*candela*) is overthrown, if oil is spilt, if a falling star is seen, somebody about the house or one of the family is sure to die. Old people will generally prepare long beforehand the needed things for their own burial—the clothes in which they will be laid out, the necessary kerchiefs, down to the tapers and the coffin. They do not like to be taken unawares, and besides, they think it safer to have everything ready, against the possible neglect of their children and relatives.

At the moment of death, when no incantations, no potations, no doctor's help, have been able to save a sick person, the priest is called in, and the last sacrament is

* Dar viața omului
E ca floarea câmpului:
Dimineața înflorește
Peste zi se vestejește."

administered, which is supposed to have a curing power sometimes, when no other physic can help. At any rate, the patient is *grijit* (cleansed, provided for); he is ready to depart from this world; he has gone through the supreme act of his religion, he dies "in his law." *Să nu mor în legea mea* ("May I not die in my own religion") is one of the heaviest oaths a man can take.

On no account should a dying man be left to breathe his last "without a candle," a lit taper, which is put into his dying hand at the very last moment, and, whatever the state of agitation of the dying man may be, this taper must be held fast in his hand by some friend or relative. *Îi ține lumânarea* ("one holds his candle") means that a man is at his last gasp, and a great wrong would be done him if he were left to die without a candle. This candle is meant to keep away bad spirits that might intrude upon the dying man, trying to tamper with his soul, and also the candle lights the soul on its way towards heaven.

If the agony is hard, a priest is called in to read special prayers (*molifte*) for the deliverance of the soul. If the man cannot die easily, something is supposed to be tormenting his soul, and, to save him from that torment, his friends will subject him to all sorts of troubles with the object of helping him to die, and grant him thus the best last service friends can grant. They will shift him to different positions on the bed, pillows and all; or they will put him to lie down on the floor, facing East; if that will not help, they will bring an ox-yoke or some wheel, things he may have sinned against, and put them under his head. For if a man cannot die easily, it is because his soul is overloaded with sins, and he will not die before pardon is granted to him. If an estate official, or a land surveyor, has a hard agony, this is supposed to be the outcome of his unjust measuring of land; to help him, they will bring a rod into the room, passing it through the window, and put the end of it into his hands: rest will come to his soul, and he will die. A curse is supposed to have a great effect upon a man's death; if some one has had reason to curse another

so that he shall not die before he is pardoned, he will indeed not be able to die; but his enemy is sought after, and if found, brought in to ask from God pardon for the cursed one. The torments of a dying man are the direct outcome of his misdeeds, injustice and wrong-doing in the first place; to these torments (*chinuri*), the friends of the dying man will do all they can to put an end, which then will mean that he is safe now, that his sins are pardoned. Of course, many other things remain to be done for the dead, but those are just as necessary for the man who has led the brightest, most angelic life, as for the one who has spent his life in the blackest of misdeeds.

When the dying man has breathed his last, the windows are opened immediately, or a glass-pane is broken, that the soul may fly out to the free air. The eyes of the dead are shut by the nearest relative—a service a man always wants to have done to him by his favourite child—the bells are rung at the little village church; the women undo their hair, letting it hang loose on their back, and begin lamenting over the dead. If grief is very great, they go lamenting round the house. This lamentation is a real formality that a poor, sorrowful woman is condemned to go through; and the words she utters are listened to, her complaint being often in verse; and it is considered quite a duty for a woman to lament *a boci* properly, her deceased husband, child or parent; it is a recognised merit to have lamented one's dead "beautifully." A woman's grief may by no means be silent, quiet. This part of the lamentation will induce many a mother-in-law to put up with daughters-in-law, if they have no daughters of their own, for they know that these are destined to lament over their dead bodies.

The dead man is thoroughly washed, shaved, and his hair dressed; he is washed in a hot bath, the water being then poured at the root of a tree, and covered with the kettle, in which it has been heated, for a while: it were a sin to walk on that water. His nails are cleanly cut, and in some places, I hear, the parings are stuck together in a small ball of wax and kept as a keepsake in

a narrow partition inside the chest. It is a fact that the Roumanian peasant is very careful about his nails, the parings of which, when cut, must be carefully gathered together and laid by safely—otherwise, in the next world, the neglectful person will have to gather them up with his or her own eyelashes. The deceased is dressed in new linen, with his best clothes and a black lamb-skin cap on his head. A married man or woman will be buried with their wedding ring on the finger. A young girl will be dressed like a bride, and a ring will also be put on her finger. The body is arranged on a table, in the middle of the room, facing East—in Transylvania, though, generally with the feet towards the door. Four tall tapers, in tall candlesticks, are lit at the four corners of the table; a priest sits by reading the *stîlpii* (the pillars), that is the Gospels. Some friends or relatives will begin making the coffin, by first taking an exact measurement of the body, with a reed or a string, and taking good care not to make it too long, which would mean that some other relative of the dead will die soon. The reed which has served for measuring is laid at the bottom of the coffin; when it is a string that has served, this is wound up, stuck into a little hole above the door and plastered over. The coffin is made of fir-planks, the bottom composed only of several transversal palings, covered over with reeds. The coffin is painted red, with white crosses on the lid and side planks. The body is put into the coffin as soon as this is ready and covered, except the head, with a white thin stuff, the *giulgiŭ*, *zovon*, *pînza*, the shroud. The hands are crossed on the breast, and between the fingers a small cross of white wax is set; this is made of a thin taper wound up and folded into the shape of a cross, with a coin in it—for the paying of the entrance fee into heaven. Under the head there is a pillow made of herbs or of the deceased's hair, if she has preserved what has been cut during life. In some places they put a comb by the pillow; in other places they put some bread and salt. If the dead has been a shepherd, they put his whistle by him in his coffin. In other places, in the coffin of a

mother of a family, they put as many dolls as she has children.

The corpse is kept three days in the house, the tapers burning continually, the priest reading as long as possible. People call in to see the dead; the relatives cry over him from time to time, but by no means should he be left alone. At night there is a gathering of guests, as large as for any entertainment; and, indeed, they play games all night long, in and out of doors, when they light a fire in the yard. This amusement, for the sake of attendance on the dead at night, is called *priveghiŭ*, a kind of watching.

After three days the body is taken to church, carried on a kind of litter, which four men bear on their shoulders, or he is driven in his ox-cart, or, in other places, in an ox-sledge, even in summer, and if the way is long, the work is hard for the oxen; to alleviate it, green plants, mostly wall-wort, are thrown on the road before the advancing sledge, that it may glide along easier. In some places, when the dead is the head of the family, the yoke is put on the necks of the oxen, with the upper part downward. Anyhow, the funeral *cortège* will advance slowly along the road, slowly, noiselessly, with no other sound than the almost continuous wailing of the woman. The litter is draped round with a stuff more or less costly, of which priestly robes are afterwards made; poorer people will hang round the litter some home-made carpets or other rougher stuff, afterwards given away to the still poorer. The dead person is carried uncovered to church, that he may behold this fair world for the last time, and take from it a last farewell. In places where it is not allowed to bury the dead uncovered two little windows are cut out on both sides of the coffin, about the head, for the dead to breathe, they say, and see his friends, and hear those who lament after him, and take leave of them; for, what is the good of lamentation, if the dead is not to enjoy it? The funeral procession is more or less large, according to the position of the family; in any case the cross and banner lead, with at least one lantern taken from the church,

and borne by men, who receive a wax taper and a kerchief in payment. Then follow several big trays with the *pomeni*, gifts of eatables for the soul of the dead; the chief item among these is the *coliva*, a kind of corn-pudding, very good to eat when well made; then come the *colaci*, some very big ones, some smaller, in which sticks covered with figs and raisins, mostly gilt, are stuck. The priest and attendants walk in front of the coffin in their robes, and holding in their hands tapers tied with a kerchief, which they then take home; all along the way they recite or rather chant prayers. Behind the coffin the family follow, the women lamenting; if possible a band will play mournful tunes; for shepherds especially, some whistler is appointed. From time to time the slowly advancing train will stop, for repeated blessings on the coffin; at every fresh start a piece of linen is spread on the road in front of the coffin, with a candle beside it, and this is to be walked over by the coffin bearers: these are *poduri* (bridges), which are supposed to be numerous, on the way to heaven; by the means of these linen bridges it is hoped to assure an easier passage to heaven for the dead. The linen and candles are given away to some poor followers. A short service is held in church; the priest then requests the family to say farewell to the dead, which is done with heartrending lamentations. The coffin is then lowered into the grave with cords and two long girdles (*brîe*), given afterwards to the grave-diggers, who have lowered down the coffin. Before the lowering of the coffin lid, the priest will throw from above wine (*apaos*) crosswise on the dead, and some mould cut with a spade from the four edges of the grave, with the last blessing of: *Fie-i ţărîna uşoară* ("May the earth be light on him"). —which those assembled silently repeat. In some places, about the mountains, two shepherds playing the horn will come, and, crossing their alp-horns over the grave, they will blow a last prolonged peal to the memory of the departed, especially if the latter was a shepherd himself. Over the grave various gifts are bestowed for the soul of the dead: a black hen in most cases, or

a sheep, or cattle. If the dead person was a young man possessing a horse, his horse will be given away over his grave to some other lad of his age, some friend of his. After the burial the procession returns home, possibly by some other way than the one just travelled with the dead; on entering the house every member of the family washes the hands, and as many friends as wish to do so. Whilst the burial was going on in the churchyard, at home some trustworthy women friends have been busy sweeping and cleaning the house and preparing the funeral dinner (the *comêndare*).

In older times there was another custom, now fallen into disuse. On the eve of the funeral day, one or more sheep, usually black, were brought home from the sheep-fold; at the rising of the stars the priest (*popa*) was called in; in his presence a hole was dug in the yard; the sheep, with burning wax candles stuck to its horns, was placed beside it, looking westward, and whilst the popa was saying a prayer, the animal was killed, the blood being made to run into that hole, called *ară*. The meat of the sheep was used for the preparation of the funeral dinner; the priest got the head and skin of the animal. This unmistakably Latin custom has died out, but the saying has remained behind: *A da pielea popii* ("To give the skin to the priest") is a very common saying, and a rather gay metaphor, meaning "to die."

At the funeral dinner, when drinking, everybody will begin by spilling a few drops of the wine, saying, "May his earth be light"; this libation is meant for the soul of the dead. As a matter of fact, a Roumanian peasant never takes any drink, be it water or anything else, without spilling a few drops on the ground, by just blowing over the drink. If the family can afford it, all those who have attended the funeral are invited to partake of the dinner; the table is then spread out of doors, on long planks, or on many yards of linen, just stretched along the courtyard on some straw, in front of which people sit down on the ground and eat. The principal table, however, at which the priest and most important guests are to sit, is laid inside the house. Besides the ordinary eatables,

every guest gets a *colac* and a candle, for the soul of the dead. *A da colac și lumânare* ("To give away *colac* and candle") has also passed into a proverb, to express the state of one who has made up his mind to bear a loss, or give up something.

In the place where the deceased has breathed his last, some coals are put in a potsherd with some incense over them, and, beside them, a glass of water, a piece of bread, and a wax candle, called *toïag*. This candle has a peculiar shape: it is made of a thin wax candle, as long as the body of the dead, coiled up and with the end turned up and lit; from time to time the coil is unwound, and kept burning all through the night for three nights running, for the enjoyment of the soul, which is supposed to be dwelling thereabouts during three days. After three days the soul is supposed to find its abode above the door lintel, that is why in some places a piece of linen is arranged there for the soul to rest upon. After the burial the most important things to attend to, are the *grijele*, the "cares" or attendances, as we may say, for the repose of the soul: services on the tomb, with accompaniment of *coliva*, *colaci* and candles, taken to church, and saying of prayers by the priest every three, nine, twenty and forty days. Then a great funeral service with dinner is given after one year (the *pomenire*), repeated every year for seven years running. Alms are given away on every occasion, among which water is considered an important item. After seven years the usage is to exhume the dead: the bones are taken out, washed in wine and buried again in a smaller coffin. At the grave, from the very moment of the burial, a broken pot—that which has been used for pouring the bath water out of the kettle—is set at the head of the tomb, with burning coals in it and incense. In some places they put a fir-tree, which for the three funeral days has been standing in the dead man's yard with all sorts of ornaments hung on it; deprived of these, the tree is stuck at the head of the grave. If the dead person was a young girl they plant ivy, and sweet-basil is sown on the tomb. Besides, at the head of the tomb a wooden cross is placed, painted

red generally, and sometimes only a red pillar. The rich get a stone, with the sun, the moon, and an inscription carved upon it. But the popular poet knows best what he would like upon his tomb; he would like a weeping-willow, with eternal tears to overshadow his lonely tomb:

"Bend, bend,
Weeping willow,
That I may reach you,
That I may wind a crown
To wear it for ever.

Bend, bend,
Weeping willow,
That the wind may blow you,
That you may kiss the earth,
That you may shade my grave." *

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* "Te lasă, te lasă
Salcie pletoasă
Să te-apuc cu mâna
Să' mpletesc cununa
S'o port tot-de-una.

Te lasă, te lasă
Salcie pletoasă
Să te bată vântul
Să săruți pământul
Să-mi umbrești mormântul.'

CHAPTER VII

THE PEASANT IN HIS RELATIONS TO FOREIGNERS

I

"You will make the foreigner brother
When milk will spring out of the stone
And the foreigner a sister
When the gun will go off unloaded."*

A GLANCE at a map of the Balkan Peninsula will bring home to us at once where and how numerous the foreigners are with whom the widespread Roumanian nation has to live in direct contact. First and foremost, there is the great Slavic sea surrounding the Roumanian land on all sides, indenting it with its numerous and varied gulfs and coves, dashing for centuries with its reckless waves on the enduring Roumanian. The Slavs in their multifarious shapes meet the Roumanians everywhere: in Bassarabia, where they altogether constitute about 12 per cent. of the whole population, although of genuine Russians there are only some 2·10 per cent. (on the whole, 34,473, the rest of some 259,000 being Ruthenians); in Bukovina, where the Slavs (Ruthenians) constitute over 30 per cent. of the total population; in Austria-Hungary at large, where the Slavic element (Bohemians, Ruthenians, Croathians, Slavonians, Servians) constitute at least one-half of the whole population of the Empire, partly only in direct touch with the

* "Atunci îi face străinul frate
Când a da din piatră lapte
Şi străina surioară
Când a pocnī pusca goală."

Roumanians. South of the Danube the continuity of the Roumanian nation is far more broken by the Slavic element: Bulgarians and Servians (respectively 3,309,816 and 2,250,712) in their own States, with comparatively few Roumanian colonists among them, and the 2,000,000 Slavs of the province of Macedonia under Turkish rule. With Slavs the Roumanians have been longest in touch; of Slavs the Roumanians have assimilated incalculable numbers; at their hands the Roumanians have received death blows, and been deprived of their too far-stretching members in Istria and Moravia, in the heart of the Austrian Empire. On their own politically constituted soil, the Roumanians have to-day some 86,000 Slavic colonists, leading the life of the Roumanians, and getting on well with them.

The next foreign neighbour in numbers, and still more in closeness of intercourse in everyday life, is the Jewish race, spread all over the world, but no doubt much more diffused in Eastern Europe; the Roumanians have to deal with this race in every corner of land occupied by them; in their own home, in Free Roumania, they accommodate no less than 400,000 Jews, probably more.

The third race, as to number, are the Gipsies (the *Tzigani*), of which in Free Roumania alone there are over 200,000 settled down, beside the endless streams of nomads.

Besides these three races, of which every Roumanian has a practical knowledge, and members of which every Roumanian peasant is obliged to meet, there are many other foreigners, the contact with whom, however, is more limited and partial. The Hungarians, being altogether over six and a half millions (against the more than ten millions of Roumanians), come, however, into contact with Roumanians only in the regions of Trasylvania (where they constitute together with the Secklers 27 per cent. of the population, as against 60 per cent. of Roumanians), in Hungary proper and in Free Roumania, namely, in Moldavia, where some 30,000 Hungarian settlers have lived for ages. With Germans

the Roumanian peasant comes into touch in Bukovina, where, however, they furnish a lower percentage than the Ruthenians; in Transylvania the Saxon settlers are no more than 10 per cent.; in Bassarabia, the number of German settlers is a little above that of the Russians proper; in Free Roumania, too, there are rather sporadic German settlers, but living chiefly in towns, hardly ever in the country. Italian settlers are of recent date, but their number seems to be increasing, especially as road-builders and stone-workers, in which capacity they stream in almost every spring. French settlers are rarer; only in towns, and almost all are of the educated class. English are still rarer, and hardly ever come within touch of the Roumanian people. Of Armenians there are a good many about the Carpathian region, but they have remained unassimilated, keeping to their own religion and usages, although without any language of their own. With the Greek the contact is more intimate : about the Pindus they have Grecised numberless Valachs or Armîni, and are still at their undermining work ; about the Carpathians the contact with the Greek has greatly diminished, shrunk back into the Danube valley to the banks of the river, in the commercial ports only; but they used to be very intimate at one time, and have not left felicitous memories behind. At the feet of the Pindus the Valachs come into nearer touch with the Albanians, the last representatives of the most ancient among the Greeks. With the Turks the Roumanian nation has had in the past to deal on a much larger scale than it does now, as Turkey stretched its suzerainty at one time high up into the Carpathians and beyond the Dniester and the Black Sea.

It seems only natural that of all the races the Roumanians have had to deal with, they should have suffered most at the hands of the uncivilised Mongol race, represented by the Turks and their friends and vassals the Tartars (South of Russia and the Crimea). These two peoples, indeed, have made themselves known to the Roumanians by their ever recurring and conjointly planned invasions, during which they plundered and sacked the Roumanian villages, taking into slavery as many men,

women, and children as they could lay hands upon, fear driving others away to the woods and mountains, into marshes and among the bulrushes, and any other secure hiding-places. The remembrance of those invasions is still alive even now, and the impressions of the sufferings caused thereby have been crystallised into a popular proverb :—

"Neither Turks nor Tartars are coming," *

to explain that there is no particularly great hurry for a thing.

No doubt all who attacked the Christian populations under the name of Turks were, truly speaking, a very varied mixture of all sorts of Asiatic tribes, so that whilst some of them may have left a respectable name in history and in people's memory, others, on the contrary, have gathered for themselves and the nation they represented the worst possible reputation. If there were valorous, disciplined troops among the Turkish armies, there were also disorderly, undisciplined hordes addicted only to plunder and cruelty, not very anxious about a fair fight or a good name ; many a battle was fought between Roumanians and Turks, and for a long time the Roumanians were victors, but in the long run the Turks got the upper hand, and the Roumanians had to submit. Then the Turkish tribes did what they liked, never fearing any check to their misdeeds from their Government at Constantinople. Thus the Roumanian countries were overrun by all sorts of adventurers, merchants, extortioners in Turkish garb and under a Turkish name, individuals who by their behaviour have impressed upon the unfortunate populations the belief that the Turk is—

"A coward as to bravery
But skilful at treachery." †

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* "Nu dau Turcii nici Tatarii."

† "Om fricos la vitejie
Dar meşter la vicleníe."

In the long run, the Roumanian came to realise that what the Turk really wanted, as an individual as well as an organised Government, was nothing else but money, hence —

"Give the Turk money, and you can put out his eyes." *

Many a sad tale has the Roumanian to tell of those times, when the plundering Turk took away many of his compatriots into slavery and enforced the Mussulman religion upon them; and when the Turk in his pretended commercial transactions with the Roumanian, always managed to put him down as an insolvent debtor, he sold his belongings, his wife, his all, to make up the amount of the debt. As a legend tells us:—

"Three black cocks crowed:
Three Turks in the land thundered:
'Sell, oh brother, thy wife
And pay off thy debt to me!'
He sold vineyards,
He sold lands,
He sold mills. . . ." †

The poor man sold everything, and at last was obliged to sell his own wife. And it seems that women fetched high prices in those days, like that particular one who was sold for thrice her weight in copper, silver and gold coins respectively, and even the *urâta cetăţii* ("the ugly one of the city") fetched not less than a bushel of ducats, another of piastres and a third of coppers. But it is not seldom that the legend ends with the discovery that the buyer is no other than the very

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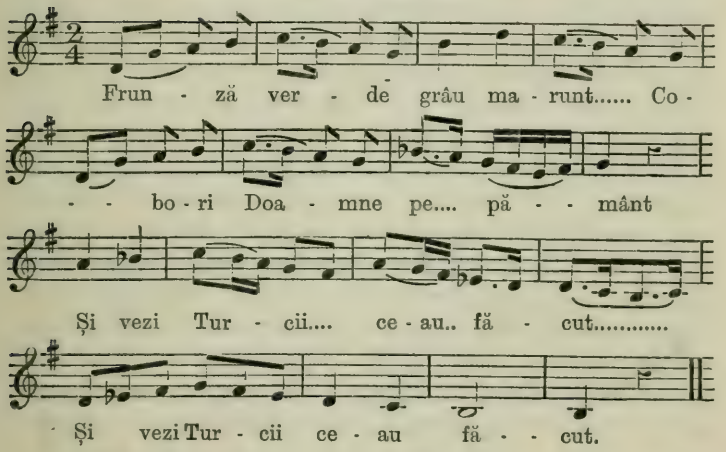
* "Turcului, dă-i bani şi scoate-i ochii."

† "Trei cucoşi negri cântară:
Trei Turci în ţară tunară:
'Vinde-ţi frate nevasta
Şi îmi plăteşte darea!'
Vându vii
Vându moşii
Vându mori. . . ."

brother of the bought woman, himself carried away by Turks in his childhood, and brought up as a Turk. He returns the wife to her husband, with still larger presents of money. Those hard times are still alive in the people's memory, as in the following popular song :—

"Green leaf of spare wheat
Come down, O Lord, on the earth
And see what the Turks have done (bis).

Many a house they have devasted,
Many a child they have orphaned,
Women they have widowed
And destroyed monasteries." *



On the other hand, the Roumanian has also had to deal with honest, humane, righteous Turks, in whom he has had occasion to observe good qualities, and these the

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* "Frunză verde grâu marunt
Cobori Doamne pe pământ
Și vezi Turcii ce-au făcut (bis).

Multe case-au pustiit,
Mulți copii au sărăcit,
Și femeï au văduvit,
Mănăstiri au răsipit."

Roumanian has ever been ready fairly to acknowledge and honour. The Turk is reputed to be a man of his word "*om de cuvînt*"; he kept his word when he had given it, only it appears that he did not give it very often, and that not many Turks made any ado about giving and breaking their word. Again, the Roumanian appreciates in the Turk the rare virtue of gratitude, which he is said to extend as far down as the seventh generation, in repayment of a service received—but revenge does not stop half-way either, it seems. Turks have been settled on Free Roumania's soil till lately, in the Dobrogia; but, very sensitive in their religious feelings, they found it too hard to abide under Christian rule, be it as tolerant as can be, and so they have flocked again under Mahomet's green flag, leaving behind the name of hard-working, honest, trustworthy labourers. Not so the Tartars, who have remained behind, not very easy to deal with, sly, cunning, and not in the least a desirable population to the others.

With the Tartars the Roumanians have had to deal ever since the thirteenth century; still more dreadful were they than the Turks, with their ever-repeated invasions. Hosts of quiet, innocent people were driven by them into captivity and slavery. Ghastly stories run current among the people about those invasions, and the subsequent fate of the unfortunate captives. As one of these stories will have it, the captives were cooped in large cages, at least the youngest among them and the children; there they were fattened on bread and walnuts, then thrust into large heated kilns, and roasted for the Tartar's dinner. One day, the Tartars, being all away on their plundering pursuits, left behind only an old Tartar woman, to get dinner ready for them. The old woman heated the kiln, then went to the cage, took out a young girl and led her to the kiln. There stood in readiness a long shovel with a kind of wheel-barrow in front, where the captive was put and just pushed into the kiln; she invited the girl: "Step, girl, on the shovel." "Step on, baba, to show me." The old woman stepped on the barrow just to show

the girl how she should do it, but the girl at once pushed the baba into the kiln, shut the opening, and then running to the cage, opened it for her friends to come out, and thus they all fled homewards. The Tartars, on coming home, saw that the woman was absent, but being too hungry to wait for her to turn up, they sat down to have their dinner. They took the roasted body out of the kiln, and began to eat it, but finding it very tough, they suspected the truth, ran to the cage and found it empty. They at once set after the fugitives to bring them back. In the meantime the latter could not go very fast, not knowing the way home; they only travelled at night, being led in their wandering by the Milky Way, that white strip on the sky which from times immemorial people have always been told was the guiding thread of escaped fugitives, and was therefore called the "Slaves' Way" (*Calea Robilor*) (which name is just as widespread among the people as that of "Trajan's Way"). By day they did not travel at all, but hid as best they could in marshes, among the high bulrushes, where, however, the Tartars often managed to find them out, with the aid of lapwings, who were trained to fly about, and then just stop and hover above the places where they caught sight of human beings. Somehow, however, these captives, or some of them at least, had the good luck to reach Moldavia, and lived on to tell the story of their flight to their descendants, who in due course added to it as much as their own fancy suggested.

Turk and Tartars are pagans, and consequently "unclean" (*spurcați*); their religion is unclean, and the Roumanian peasant feels no respect towards it. They eat fat on a Friday; they do not make the sign of the cross, and the Roumanian will have nothing in common with them. Let the Turk or Tartar stick to his own creed, the Roumanian will not feel bound to try to convert him, but he will also never mix socially with him.

Towards his Christian neighbours the feelings of the Roumanian peasant are regulated on the same principle:

if they eat fat on a Friday, they are unclean; if not, they are all right. With people of the same Christian creed he will wed, never with people of a different creed, unless in rare cases, when they consent to adopt his own creed, and come to live in his village, and speak his language; and so it is that the Roumanian peasant has accomplished through centuries, quite unconsciously and quietly, the greatest work of denationalisation ever done, not by imposing his views upon others, but just by loyally sticking to his own. Thus his character has been moulded, in the long run, to reserve, to indifference towards other peoples, but at the same time to tolerance, in religion as in everything else. Thus it is that the Roumanian peasant, with all his superstitions and in some ways narrow views, is tolerant, large-minded, even high-minded, towards his fellow-creatures :—

> "Do in thy life ever good,
> Even to the foreign * nations." †

It is nevertheless true that upon his foreign neighbour the Roumanian peasant looks rather down than up; a little of the Roman pride seems to have trickled down into his descendant's veins, and he is ever ready to believe himself the superior of his foreign fellow-man. The Russian, taken as an individual, is supposed to be a rough kind of being, eating raw vegetables; the pig is metaphorically called "a Russian with a rouble in his snout." The word "moujik," meaning simply peasant in Russian, has been adopted in the Roumanian vocabulary only as an epithet of great scorn, to mean a coarse, churlish, ill-bred fellow—*mojic*. The Russian is supposed to be of a greedy nature. An anecdote tells us that a Russian went into a shop to buy some cheese, but somehow he managed to buy soap instead. He went home and sat down to supper, but on beginning to eat

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* Nation and religion are equal notions in the peasant's mind, and both are rendered by "*lege*" = law.

† "Fă în viața ta tot bine,
Chiar și legilor străine."

found the cheese rather tough and of particularly high flavour; oh, but he would not lose his money.

"He shall eat even to bursting,
Ivan gave money for it!" *

has become quite a common proverb.

The Russian is said to be a cheat even in his gratitude: A Russian was very ill; when everything had been tried and found useless for his recovery, he had recourse to the help of the saints—namely, to St. Nicolaï, to whom he promised that if the saint cured him, he would sell his horse, and with the whole price of it have an immense taper made and light it in front of the saint's image. He recovered. But as to the fulfilment of his vow, he took his horse to market, along with a cock, insisting on selling them together, but asking one hundred roubles for the cock and one rouble for the horse. At last he comes to terms for eighty and one half rouble respectively, pockets the eighty roubles, and with the half rouble buys a taper, which he lights in front of the saint's image, with prayers and assurances that he had done all that was in his power for the satisfaction of the vow.

But with the Russian at large the Roumanian has hardly ever had occasion to meet on peaceful friendly footing; it is much rather during wars, and invasions, and plunderings, and military occupations that they have learned to know each other, and so there is no wonder at all that from Bassarabian folklore we should gather—

"Than the Christian Muscovite
Much better the pagan Turk!" †

The German—truly speaking, the Austrian, with whom the Roumanian has had most to do—is supposed to be,

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* "I mâncà, i crapà, Ivan bani dat."

† "Decât Moscalu creştin
Mult mai bine Turc păgân!"

in the first place, rather addicted to drink: "He has taken the German's pipe" (*A luat luleana Neamțului*), is said of a tipsy man. Conceited and self-reliant, but weak at the bottom, courage is not supposed to be his strong point. An anecdote tells that a Roumanian met a German stepping proudly forward with a rifle on his shoulder and a dog at his heels:—

"Where are you going, German?"

"To the war!"

"But what do you take your dog for?"

"I will cut up Turks and feed him with them."

After some time, they met again, the German humble and hungry looking.

"Where are you coming from, German?"

"From the war" (in a weak, depressed tone).

"And the dog, where is he?"

"I've cut him up and eaten him."

The German finds it very hard to learn Roumanian, and even if he does learn it, never pronounces it well. An old German is said to have been settled down as shoemaker in a small country town; after fifty years of residence there he knew no Roumanian, and is reported to have exclaimed in disgust: "How stupid these Roumanians are; fifty years I have lived among them, and they know no German yet!" On the other hand, Germans are supposed to be very clever with their hands; every mechanical progress is ascribed to them—probably because the Germans started the first railways in Roumania. Electricity and steam engines are called "devilries of the German."

The Hungarian does not enjoy much sympathy, and not without reason, although, as far as my experience goes, hatred would never have sprung up between nations if Governments had not been there to kindle and foster it. People of different nations might have liked or disliked each other, silently, individually, for racial or individual good or evil qualities; they might have kept apart from each other, or mixed and unconsciously influenced one another, as they always have done at the times when politics were in their infancy, but with

Government persecutions it is quite natural that national hatred should have been born. No doubt, it is the young civilisation, the new-born national feelings that have done it; let us hope that a ripe civilisation, a higher stage of human thought and feeling, will atone for it. Very conceited and vain is the Hungarian supposed to be, caring for nothing on earth but his mustachio and spurs and his horse, if he has got one. Very likely the reciprocal opinion of the Hungarian about the Roumanian is not much more amiable; at any rate, this is what the Roumanian thinks about the Hungarian. Cunning and clever at stealing:—

"All through the length of the country
No thief like the Hungarian:
At night he steals,
By day he swears"*—

says one of the popular satires. Not much discernment to boast of, with all that. An anecdote reports that a Hungarian went to town, got drunk, and somehow lost one of his spurs. On his way home he could not get farther than half-way, and dropped down and fell asleep. A carriage comes along; the hurried driver shouts to him to draw up his leg; the Hungarian awakes, looks at his leg for a while, then says quietly:—

"Drive on, it is not my foot; don't you see it has got no spur on?"

Another anecdote tells us about two soldiers, a Hungarian and a Roumanian, both in the infirmary after a battle.

The Roumanian says: "How is it, Janosh, that you can keep quiet so well when the attendant comes to straighten your leg, while I can't help shrieking like a madman when he attends to me?"

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* "Cât e ţara de-a lungul
Nu-i talhar ca Ungurul:
Noaptea fură,
Ziua jură."

"Oh," says the Hungarian, "you are only a stupid Roumanian, that is why; *I* am a Hungarian, my man, and not so stupid as to give him the wounded leg to rub; I just give him the sound one, and it does not hurt a bit!"

A not very complimentary legend is told about the origin of the Hungarian. At the time when Christ walked on earth, with His faithful St. Peter, this saint repeatedly made the request:—

"Lord, you who are so powerful, and have made so many things and beings out of nothing, do make a Hungarian also!"

"Oh no, Peter," answered the Lord; "you do not know what you are asking for; we shall get into trouble with him, if I make a Hungarian."

But as Peter insisted, the Lord decided to satisfy his wish, and just stooped down on the road, with shut eyes, to take anything that might happen to be at hand, as a groundwork for His creation. He happened to pick up some refuse, and of this he made the Hungarian. But the latter was hardly made, when he drew up his mustachio, clapped his feet to make his spurs clink, and shouted "Passport!" in a voice that startled both the Creator and His companion.

"Well now, Peter, didn't I tell you?" said the Almighty, very much taken aback, as they had no passports in those times.

The Servian is reputed as particularly dull-minded, unable to distinguish "a boot from a pipe."

The Bulgarian has always been looked upon in a more friendly way, if not exactly much more complimentary, but feelings may possibly change for the worse if political circumstances do not improve.

Still truer friends have the Albanese always been reckoned: "Valach and Albanese, brothers," goes the saying, but this only in as far as both are Christians; but unfortunately most of the one million and a half of Albanese in existence have gone over to Islam, and, together with their co-religionists the Turks, are joining hands to crush their Christian brothers, or rather, the

stronger among them unite to crush the best of the poorer population.

The Greek has never been a great friend to the Roumanian, and, moreover, was very much hated in old times: his name is hardly to be met with in the Roumanian folklore without the hardest epithets; the reputation of heartless, cheating, cowardly, has remained with him. Extremely conceited and vain besides, often a dupe to his own vanity. As an anecdote reports, a Greek went once into a barber's shop, and whilst the barber was busy with another customer, he sat down on a chair to wait for his turn. The barber, however, had seen the Greek, but acted as if he had not, wanting to play a practical joke on him. So he went on speaking to the man in his hands:—

"I do hate soap and water! they make one so dirty. And really, when you come to think of it, they are rather things for women's usage; now, in Athens, for instance, no *Archonda Palicar* (nobleman) would ever use soap and water; they simply shave dry."

After having finished with his first customer, he took the basin with soap and water and made towards the Greek:—

"You wish to be shaved, I presume?"

"Yes, but no soap or water, please, we only shave dry in Athens, I am an Archonda Palicar."

The barber set to work, but the Greek stopped him after a while.

"Look here, my friend, I am not quite a Palicar; you might just as well take a little water."

But as the razor wouldn't go any smoother—

"You really may take more water, I am no Palicar at all!"

And as the shaving was just as hard to bear—

"Well, you see, just take *some* soap, I am not quite from Athens, but only from the suburbs!"

As the result, however, was still far from satisfactory:—

"Look here, use as much soap as is necessary, I am not from Athens at all, but a hundred miles away!"

Empty pride seems to have always been the striking characteristic of the Greek; whenever Greeks came into the Roumanian principalities of old they all wanted to be taken for nobles and to be looked up to by the Roumanians. An old anecdote relates that during their good time in these countries, a Greek was asked where he was going by a Roumanian he had met with, in the latter's simple way:—

"Where are you going, man?"

"I am not a man, I am a Greek!" was the proud answer.

Later on, after the revolution of 1821 and the overthrow of Greek rule, they happened to meet again:—

"How are you, Greek?"

"I am not a Greek, I am a Roumanian."

"But what are you doing there?"

"Eh, I am pasturing *pendi, exi* (five or six) pigs!"

They are not pasturing pigs now, neither are there many of them among the people of Free Roumania, except as merchants in towns; and clever merchants they are too, making fortunes in no time; and a strong reputation they have as sly, cheating merchants. The palm of slyness, however, has been bestowed, rightly or wrongly, upon the Armenian, much more than on the Greek, by the popular mind which has invented this gradation among the foreign merchants it has had to deal with: a Jew can cheat seven Roumanians; a Greek can cheat seven Jews, but an Armenian can cheat seven Greeks.

The Armenians have settled down among the Roumanians of the Carpathian region in colonies as old as the fourteenth century, and have lived apart, and have been kept at a distance, on account of religious differences; the reciprocal distrust and dislike has been very much fed by the Greeks, who fought a long while with the Armenians for the supremacy of their respective archiepiscopal sees. Through the Greek clergy a number of beliefs have been introduced among the people about supposed Armenian superstitions and usages, which make them in the peasant's mind the uncleanest among unclean

people. A peasant will hardly eat anything from an Armenian. On the other hand, the cleanliness of the Armenian house is readily acknowledged :—

"Sleep with the Armenian, eat with the Jew." *

Indeed, if the Jews ever enjoyed a good name, it has been only with regard to the cleanliness of their food; this character is founded on the extreme anxiety of the Jews to eat nothing but *kusher* (food allowed by their religious official, the *haham*). Otherwise, there exists no filthier or more contemptible race than the Jew in the popular mind. Cheating, fraudulent, sly, cowardly, false, obsequious, there exists no vile epithet ever thought too bad for the Jew. And the fact is that the Jew never minds, still less revolts against, any scornful appellation, but is ever ready to accept any demonstration of disdain, if only a penny can thereby be gained. The Carpathian Jews, living about Roumania, Transylvania, Bukovina, Bassarabia, come mostly from Poland and Russia. They are quite a different type from the English Jew; always fair—with few exceptions —with red, thinly curled hair, conspicuously freckled face, which is explained by the people thus:—

After Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, some Jews sitting round their table at dinner were talking about the event. A tureen of soup, in the midst of which swam a boiled cock, was on the table. They would not at all agree as to the resurrection, but one of them said that if that were possible, the cock in the tureen might as well return to life. At this the cock, with a mighty crow, jumped out flapping his wings, and besprinkled them all over with soup, and hence the freckles. The Jew wears an oriental costume: a long, black *tallar*, breeches to the knees, long white dirty stockings in slippers; a black velvet cap with a large brim of fur, like a fox's tail, on the head; the hair cut short, except two long

* "Să dormi la Arman, să mânânci la Jidan."

curls in front of the ears, called *pertchiuni*. This is the type to be met with on the northern and eastern slopes of the Carpathians, particularly in Moldavia, where the population being meeker and more patient, and of less warlike energy, they have found it easier to have their own way. In towns that costume is almost entirely given up, and is to be met with only on Saturdays, here and there. All these Jews, although supposed to come from Russia or Galicia, invariably speak German—a broken German, but still German. To pronounce Roumanian is very hard for them, and you hardly ever come across one who does it well; as a rule, the Jew is immediately recognisable by his accent. The Jews, like any other aliens, have the right to buy properties in town, but not in the country, and a blessing it is so, for otherwise, thanks to the extravagance of the large Roumanian landowners, all large properties would by now be in Jewish hands, as they are in Hungary and Transylvania, where about a quarter of the rural property is said to be already in their possession. But they have the right to farm land, and they find it lucrative, very lucrative; and whilst the sons of great national landowners are struggling in towns, looking for posts with salaries, the Jews make fortunes on their lands, caring for nothing but money-making, despoiling peasant as well as land of their last productive power. Poor Jews, who keep in hand all the town commerce, manage also to keep shops in villages, and very often public-houses too, where with adulterated drink and crafty speculation in human weakness and dry throats, they have ever been busy, doing no end of harm to the rural populations. Their real power, however, is in towns, but these are beyond our present scope.

Popular humour, in village and town, has found a wide field in the various characteristics of the Jewish race, greed for money and love of gain being the all-prevailing ones. An anecdote says that a Jew—or rather his soul—went once to heaven, and taking the guardian angel unawares walked into God's gardens. When the

angel caught sight of him he tried all means to get him out, but in vain: the Jew maintained that he had as much right as anybody else to be there, as there was no entrance fee to be paid. St. Peter was called, and tried to reason the Jew out of Paradise, but with no greater success; neither could David or Solomon persuade him to leave heaven. But a little angel took a drum, and standing outside of the wall of heaven, began to drum noisily. "What is the matter?" was the general inquiry. "An auction." "Oh, wait a moment," the Jew ejaculated, "I will bid!" and out he fled, and the doors were closed upon him.

Another anecdote tells us that a Jew was being fiercely beaten by a Roumanian, without the slightest attempt on his part to retaliate or in any way escape his punishment; when asked afterwards why he did not at least run away: "Well," said he, "I had my foot on a stray halfpenny!"

Jews are very timorous, always afraid of handling weapons; army service is not to their liking either. A Jew recruit, an anecdote tells us, pretended to be stone-deaf in order to escape service, and nothing on earth could induce him to betray himself till at last the captain said, "Oh, let him go, he is stone-deaf!" But a soldier at his back said in an undertone, "Who lost this half-penny?" "Oh, it is I, to be sure!" exclaimed the Jew.

Another anecdote says that the Jews, rather loth to be always thought of as cowards, decided to raise of their own accord an army on foot, and started for the war. For a while all went on smoothly enough; they marched bravely all day long, and slept in the open at night, but when attacked by a dog from a mill they happened to pass, they stopped and held council, and decided to go back and appoint some Roumanians to defend the army against dogs!

No end of anecdotes illustrate all sides of the Jewish character, but a last one will suffice, pointing out the difference of occupation of the Jews as compared to the Christian inhabitants of the country. Men of several

nations—a Turk, a Russian, a Hungarian, and a Jew—once were discussing the possible nationality of Adam; every one of them thought Adam had been of his own nation, but the Jew, on the authority of the Bible, maintained that Adam was a Jew. The others, not having such strong authority as the Bible to rely upon, seemed inclined to accept his statement, when a Roumanian just passing by was asked his opinion. "Well, you see," he said, "when Adam was driven out of heaven, had he been a Jew, he would undoubtedly have opened a public-house, instead of which he started tilling the ground, which shows him to have been a good Christian like us."

The Jews never take to field labour, as so many other foreigners, coming from afar every summer, are doing; indeed, they do not care for any hard physical work. Even in towns the poorest Jewess will always get a Roumanian or gipsy woman to wash her linen, or to do the heavier part of the house cleaning; they spare themselves much more than the Roumanians do. Besides, money-making is much easier for them, the poorest Jew finding, like the richest, the means of being, besides his other business, a bit at least of a pawnbroker and dreadful usurer, ever ready for the wants of the Roumanian spendthrift.

But the true subject of Roumanian humour and of Roumanian jokes, the mark for his fun and ridicule, is no doubt the very peculiar and in many ways funny gipsy, the *Tzigan*.

Almost in every village, in the outskirts of most of the towns, in many woods, you are sure to come across gipsy settlements, gipsy huts, *bordeie*, in numbers more or less large. These are settled gipsies, who lead, nevertheless, a more or less nomadic life in the country itself, going away in summer for work or theft, returning for the winter to their shabby huts. They hardly ever live in houses above ground, and even then it is rare that these should be whitewashed, but they are brushed over with grey clay or even left in their first clay plastering; their usual dwellings are huts dug in the ground, with only a slanting roof appearing on the outside; in

the middle of the hut they make the fire, the smoke going out through a large chimney in the roof. Hearths and ovens are seldom to be met with in gipsies' huts. They lead a very low kind of life, representing the lowest stage of humanity. There are several kinds of gipsies. The superior kind seems to be that of the *Ursari*, those who deal with bears (from *urs*, bear), taming and then leading them about to dance; but that is not their chief trade: these are said to be gipsies of many trades, making also caldrons and kettles, and their wives tell fortunes. An even less noble kind of gipsies are the *Lingurari*, whose original trade seems to have been the making of spoons (*linguri*). Most of these, settled down in the villages and towns, are the descendants of the old slaves, who were given their liberty only in the last generation. But the universal trade of the gipsies, for which every one of them seems to have some talent, is that of being *lăutari* (musicians); so much so that a musician playing at the Sunday dance, at the wedding, or any other rejoicing, is called simply a *tzigan*. The gipsies have a peculiar organisation among themselves, some remnant of an old patriarchal organisation; they have a chief called *bulibasha*, to whom, however, they seem to tender only a loose kind of obedience. This organisation causes some amusement; I knew of a gipsy settlement with a *bulibasha* whom they called nothing less than "God."

As for their notorious, universal trade, they are thieves, and many crimes have been and are still over and over again discovered of their doing. Still greater thieves are the nomad gipsies, those who only pass across the country, just temporarily settling down in camps and canvas tents, with their travelling stithies, their multifarious work cheating, fortune telling, and far-reaching thefts. Yet the gipsy is looked upon by the Roumanian peasant only as a queer, ridiculous kind of human being; rather harmless, with all his stealing and lying, easily caught; rather clever, but of a naive, foolish sort of cleverness, and that exactly makes the gipsy a fit subject for amusing anecdotes. The gipsy is really the living plaything of the good-humoured Roumanian peasant. "A gipsy

is not like a man" (*Ţiganu nu-i ca omu*), says he; he does everything wrong, he was created like that. A little anecdote establishes this scale for the gipsy—not very easy to render, its wit lying chiefly in the double meaning of words:—

A Turk, a Roumanian and a gipsy went to God to ask for some gift. The Turk entered first.

"What do you wish?" asked God.

"Well, Lord" (*Bine, Doamne*—that is, "it is well," a typical answer of the Roumanian peasant when asked what he has come for; *bine* means also *well-being*).

"Well-being, shall you have in the world," was the Lord's answer, taking thus the second meaning of the word *bine*.

Enters the Roumanian.

"What do you wish?" asks God again.

"Well, Lord," says the Roumanian.

"The well-being has been taken by the Turk."

"And I?" (in Roumanian *Dar*, meaning "and," or "but" but also *gift*, whence *darnic*=generous, giver).

"*Darnic* (generous), shall you be!" answered God.

Enters the gipsy.

"What do you wish?"

"Well, Lord."

"The well-being has been taken by the Turk."

"But (*dar*) I?"

"The *dar* (the gift) has been taken by the Roumanian."

"What derision and scorn is this, Lord?" retorted the wrathful, ill-bred gipsy.

"Derision and scorn shall be yours!"

And thus it is that a gipsy looks always ridiculous and is always laughed at.

A good many proverbs are attributed to gipsy experiences. "Another goose in the other bag"—which means: "that is another question"—is explained by the following anecdote. A gipsy went one night and stole two geese, putting one in each partition of the wallet he wore aslant his shoulder. On going away, he met a man who asked what he had in the front bag. "Some

corn," was his answer. "But in the other bag?" "Another goose," was the too hasty answer.

A very expressive proverb again is this: "He has eaten his credit, like the gipsy his church," which arose from the following anecdote. The gipsies decided once to build a church of their own, but, as they were to spend money on it, they wanted it to be everlasting, so they held a council to discuss the affair, but could not agree as to the material to be used. They thought of building it of wood, "but wood rots and does not last as long as the world;" they tried to have it of iron, "but iron grows rusty and has no everlasting durability;" to make it of stone, "the stone breaks and does not last for ever," either. At last they agreed to make it of cheese—and once, when they were very hungry, they ate it.

The gipsy is endowed with very lively imagination. A gipsy is said to have found a horseshoe; he brought it home, and to the eager inquiries of the little gipsy crowd (*danci*), he explained that this was a horseshoe and that four of them were wanted for the shoeing of the horse; and then he went on to say that if father found three more shoes by chance, and then if father had the good luck to find a mare also, he would shoe her, and then have a fine ride on horseback; and maybe in time the mare might have a little colt—"A dear little pied colt, which *I* shall mount!" shouted merrily one of the little gipsy boys. "Thou nasty wretch! I will teach thee to mount such a young colt and break his back," shouted the irate father; "I shall never forgive thee that!" and he beat his too imaginative offspring.

He is much disposed to dreams of grandeur, which usually end in blows upon his back, poor dreamer! A gipsy on horseback, a caldron behind, set forth, very proud of his appearance, thinking all along how good-looking he must be, like a St. George on his horse; he might verily be taken for an emperor! And how he would laugh then! Oh no, that would not do; laughing would not be right surely for an emperor! And thus he rode on, soliloquising on his possible greatness. But he was overheard by a cow drover, who at once took in the situation, and began to cheer the would-be emperor.

"Great emperor, have pity upon a blind man!"

"Well now," thought the emperor, "there must be something in it, if even a blind man can see I am like an emperor; fate may be fulfilling itself after all."

"Great emperor!" resumed the drover.

"How do you know I am an emperor?"

"On hearing such a noisy rider, I thought he could not but be an emperor! And I am blind, and a monk said to me that if I could get the chance of wiping my eyes with the hair of an emperor I should see again."

The credulous gipsy bent his head, the drover took in hand his long locks, and pulled and pulled, and beat him, and took horse and all from him. The poor gipsy ran away without stopping, till he met a man, to whom he said, "If you go that way, just take care of yourself; there is a blind beast there which takes you smoothly at first, and honours you, until he gets your hair into his clasp, then there is work for you to get away."

Always hungry, always on the look-out for something to eat, to lay hands on, over and over again caught, always short of resourceful inventiveness, a gipsy was caught by a Roumanian in his garden, stealing onions.

"How came you here, gipsy?"

"The wind blew me, Roumanian."

"But what is your hand doing on that onion?"

"I am holding it tight so as not to be taken again by the wind."

"But then what are those onions doing in your bag?"

"Well, that is just it, don't you see, dear Roumanian!"

No power of invention, but ready at ridiculous imitation. A gipsy was said to have stolen a gun and was taken before the judge. A Roumanian was already there, under accusation of having stolen a pig. He was defending himself, as best he might, explaining that he had not stolen the pig, but reared it since it was only one foot high. The gipsy overheard him, and when his own turn came to defend his case: "I have not stolen the gun, but reared it with broth of maize since it was one foot long," said he.

The Roumanian peasant has put down his troubles

with justice and administration, in a gipsy anecdote too. A gipsy had committed some theft, and was now in the hands of the police; what is he to do? No friends, no powerful relatives to mediate for him, what can he do? At last he decided to sell all he possessed and with the product to bribe the magistrate (the *sous-prifet*). In effect, he is set at liberty and comes to his home full of joy and all ablaze about what a good thing money is, and how it can bring you out of any trouble; "in fact," he went on to say, "it is a great pity things could not be managed thus in Adam's time; I am sure he would have had his sin remitted!"

"But have you got a receipt for the money?" asked his old more experienced mother.

"No, I have not!"

"How could you neglect that, wretched boy; did you ever hear of any one giving money without a receipt?"

The gipsy went to the official and asked for a receipt.

"What, you scoundrel! does the like of you ask a receipt when he has stolen?" was that official's answer.

Poor, foolish, silly gipsy, always taken in, always cheated, as the Roumanian peasant only too often feels himself to be. A gipsy one winter had got a sheepskin; he felt nice and warm in it, and went out for a walk to take the air, thinking all the time what a good thing it was to be warm in the winter. But now he catches sight of a man in an old military coat. Old and worn out it was, but then it was blue, and with plenty of red on it—and the gipsy is so very fond of red! and it had, moreover, several glittering brass buttons! And now, that he comes to think of it, the gipsy found his sheepskin rather heavy, and the smell of it not very nice either! The coat was thinner, to be sure, but fitting so beautifully tight on the body it could not but keep it warm too! He proposed the exchange to the man, who accepted, of course, off-hand. As the gipsy was going along now in his tight coat, on the ridge of the hill, where he reckoned the wind would be less keen, being much more scattered than in the valley, where it blew all in a mass; his teeth were chattering with cold when he

came upon a man wrapped in a fishing net, and who seemed cheerful enough.

"What garment is that?" asked the gipsy; "and don't you feel cold in it;"

"No," said the other, "the wind couldn't hold in my garment; it is all holes, you see; where could the cold keep in? It comes in at one side, goes out at the other, where could it stop?"

"Would you not exchange it for my coat?"

"Well, I don't mind, but let me tell you that one more advantage for you is this, that with this net you can catch fish also, and besides, at night you may make a tent of it, and need no house to sleep in."

The bargain was made. The gipsy went away in his net, and as night was just upon him, he decided that he would at once settle down for the night and spread out his tent. Once in the tent, thought he, he would not mind so much about the cold; true, to set up his tent, he had to take it off his shoulders, but then one does not care much for dress indoors! And so he laid himself down to sleep, and putting out a finger through the net: "Good gracious, how cold it must be out of doors, when I who am indoors am nearly frozen to death!"

II

The Roumanian peasant is strongly attached to his birthplace; if he has to live in another place he calls and feels himself *străin* (foreign, or stranger, both words being rendered by one and the same word in Roumanian). He is shy among strangers and extremely reserved. To a young man who is going to take a wife from another region, his mother gives this cautious warning:—

"Georgey, my dear treasure,
Mind well what I tell you:*

---

* "Ghiorghiță, binele meu
Bagă 'n samă ce-ți spun eu:

Go not into the house unbidden,
Drink not the glass uninvited."*

He feels very lonely and wretched in a strange or foreign place :—

"Whom you will be angry with
Curse him to be a foreigner.
Lonely I am, like the leaf on the walnut;
Finding no kindness where'er I go? '†

And—

"So it is, Lord, among strangers
Like a young shoot among thorns;
The wind blows and ever shakes it,
Against all the thorns it beats it."‡

Contact with the foreigner has ever been irritating; foreign occupations have left this experience, this feeling :—

"There is no bitterer fruit
Than foreigners in the land!"§

A Roumanian girl will never marry a foreigner and leave her country; nor will she be willing to marry a Roumanian if estranged from his folk and land. The young man from Bassarabia complains :—

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* Nu 'ntra 'n casă nechemat
Nu bea pahar ne' nchinat."

† "Pe cine-i avea mânie
Blastămă-l străin să fie.
Şi 's străin ca frunza 'n nuc
N'am milă unde mă duc."

‡ "D'aşa-i Doamne 'ntre străini
Ca mlădiţa între spini;
Sufla vântul s' o clăteste
De toţi spinii mi-o loveşte."

§ "Nici o poamă nu-i amară
Ca străinatatea 'n ţară!"

"Well did I like the way down here,
But now have none to tread it for!
The little dearie I have loved
Says that I am Russified
And speaks like a foe to me.
From the bank when she sees me,
She says ever: 'Away with thee,
For thou shalt never have me!
When thou wert a Roumanian pure
I had given thee my soul,
But since thou hast turned Cossack
Thou art hateful like the devil!'
The Prut is wide and I cannot
Swim across, over to her;
The Prut is like a dragon
When I get upon its bank!" *

The Roumanian peasant, severed from his old country, will never have anything to do with the foreign ruler; neither is he willing to learn his language; it is a Roumanian from Bassarabia who sings again:—

"Russian will I ever learn
When I shall forget my tongue;
When corn will grow in the hall †

---

* "Drag mi-a fost drumu' ntra coace
Şi n' am pentru cine-l face!
Puiculiţa ce-am iubit
Zice că m' am muscălit
Şi-mi vorbeşte dusmăneşte,
De pe mal când mă priveşte,
Şi-mi tot zice: 'Fugi departe
Că de mine tu n' ai parte!
Când erai Român curat
Sufletul meu ţi l'am dat,
Dar de când te-ai căzăcit
Eşti ca dracul de urât!'
Prutu-i mare şi nu pot
Păn 'la ea ca să înot;
Prutul vine ca un zmeu
Când sosesc pe malul seu!"

† "Muscăleşte—oiŭ învata
Când eu limba mi-oiŭ uita.
Când a creşte grâu'n tindă

And its ear will reach the ceiling;
When corn will grow in the room
And the ear reach to the table!"*

The Roumanian peasant is a bad emigrant; he does not like moving away and being separated from his friends. It is again from Bassarabia that the strain of a distressed mother resounds:—

"Green leaf of feather-grass
Black clouds are seen from the dawn,
The lightning cuts through the sky,
Rain comes down, pouring rain;
Down below the forest groans
With thunder, with thunder-bolt.
It rains hail, and spoils my vineyard,
The Moscovites come, take off the lads,
And lead them among strangers,
Among strangers, among pagans.
Than fall by the Moscovites
Better had I hung myself,
For they do beat and maim you
Speak you to them Moldavian.†

---

* Şi-a ajunge spicu'n grindă
Când a creşte grâu'n casă
Şi-a ajunge pănă'n masă."

† "Frunză verde de nagară
Nori negri se văd în zori,
Fulgerul cerul mi-l taie
Vine ploaie, vine mare
Hueşte pădurea 'n vale
De tunet, de trăsnet mare.
Plouă piatră viia-mi strică
Vin Moscali, flăcăi ridică
Şi mi-i duce prin străini
Prin străini, printre păgâni.
Decât la Moscali picam
Mai bine mă spânzuram
Că te bate, te stâlceste.
De-i grăeşti moldoveneşte

Woe to the foreigner,
He is like the tree by the road:
All passers-by throw at it
And deprive it of its leaves.
Two little clouds come from the North,
This news they have brought to me
That *Costică* is in Tiflis,
And is weeping all along
By the foes badly ill-used.
'Weep no more, *Costică*, dear,
Enough it is that we weep:
Thy father weeps, I weep, too,
The children weep after us . . .
May good God allow us
To see thy dear face again,
For we die with longing for thee!'"*

It is from Bassarabia, too, that one of the finest popular melodies has sprung, produced by the conflict between longing for the birthplace and love for the fair one. The words are few and simple:—

"Green leaf of lemon
Yearning draws me to *Congaz*.
'Yearning do not press me on†

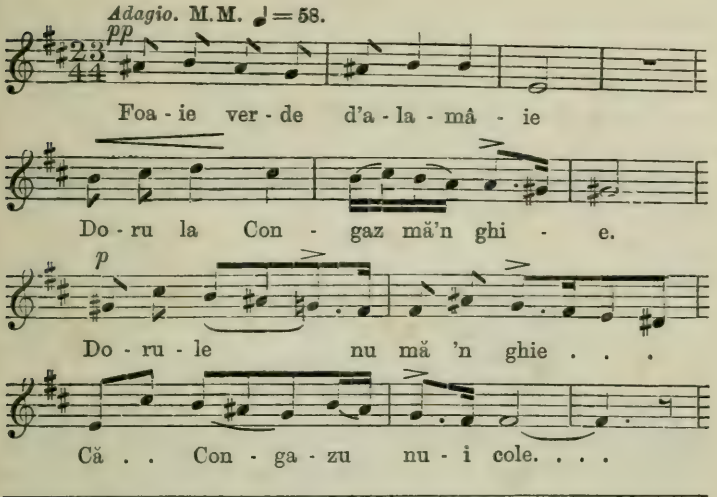
---

* Vai de neamul cel străin
E ca pomul lângă drum.
Cine trece-l sburătueşte
Şi de crengi îl sărăceşte.
Vin doi nouraşi din sus
Astă veste mi-au adus,
Că Costică-i în Tiflis
Şi o duce într' un plâns
De duşmani tare ucis.
'Nu mai plângi Costică hăi
Că destul cât plângem noi
Plânge tat-to, plâng şi eu
Plâng copiii după noi . . .
De-ar da bunul Dumnezeu
Sa-ţi mai vedem chipul-tău
Că perim de dorul tău!'"

† "Foaie verde d' alamâie
Doru la Congaz mă' nghie.
'Dorule nu mă' nghie

For Congaz is not close by;
Congaz is a far-off place
From the fair one it divides me'"*

—sung on the following tune:—



* Că Congazu nu-i cole
Ci Congazu-i loc departe
De puicuța mă desparte.'"

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEASANT IN HIS AMUSEMENTS AND PASTIMES

I

"Dear is to me the Roumanian dance
But I know not how to start it;
If I do not start it fitly
Shame shall I bring upon me!" *

THERE is hardly a Roumanian village of any size where a dance will not be held on a Sunday or holiday. Dancing is the chief amusement of the Roumanian peasant, from early spring far into the late autumn, and often also in winter. In this respect, however, as in every other with peasant usages, local colour is very much to be taken into account, considering as local, though, not the village type but the provincial type generally. What the cause of differences between one region and another may be, it would be difficult to say, but it varies with local taste and local originality; certainly it has nothing to do with administrative divisions. In the mountain regions the lines of division appear rather more clearly, the dividing line the river valley; habits as well as costumes vary from valley to valley, and so do the local details of amusements. Still keeping to the national ground-work in general, each valley has a variety of usages of its own, which, on the

* "Drag mi-i jocul românesc
Dar nu știu cum să-l pornesc;
Și de nu l' oiŭ porni bine
Lesne voiŭ păți rușine!"

whole, define the small fatherland the peasant feels so much bound to, in the bosom of the larger fatherland. Besides, the plain presents differences from the mountain, without being itself uniform in all its area; it may fairly be assumed that usages and customs in the plain vary pretty much with the basin of the rivers running through it.

Generally speaking, dancing is the favourite Sunday pastime all over the Roumanian ground. In some places they start the dance earlier, in others later; in some places there may be a dance regularly every Sunday, in other places—smaller ones—only occasionally, the people then walking to the neighbouring village to take part in *its* dance. As a matter of fact, by noon on a Sunday, a traveller is sure to come across a peasant dance in every village of any size. At Easter the dance is accompanied by the swing (the *scrânciob*), built on purpose for these occasions, which swing is also subject to local rules: in some places it is used only up to Ascension Day, in others all the year round, or, more accurately speaking, as long as it will last, which is never a whole year.

The dance takes place in front of the public-house, where there is a large, more or less even, well-beaten, if not always well-swept, ground, the *bătătura* ("beaten ground"). Occasionally, the public-house may be provided with a large room with timber floor, where the peasants will crowd together, the young to dance, the old to look at the dancers, but the atmosphere becomes so stuffy in time that the open air seems far preferable. Neither is the dancing-room other than a rarity in villages, and where there is one, the lads have a liking for it on no other account but the timbered floor, the stamping of their heels resounding ever so much better on the boards! The open ground is not without drawbacks either: the heat of the sun—but in all the dances I had occasion to watch, never an idea of minding the sun arose; the men with their hats or fur bonnets on, the girls with only their flowers and ribbons on their heads, they wipe the streaming perspiration from their brows, and go merrily on, dancing and enjoying themselves tremendously.

Another drawback is the dust that rises after a while under the feet of the energetic dancers; but this they seem to mind just as little. In some places, some one will from time to time sprinkle the ground with water, but in other places nobody wastes a thought on dust!

One wonders that just at that time of the year when work is hardest during the week, dancing should fill up the Sunday, when people would rather be expected to rest from their hard toil of the week. But this is what they explained to me as being a very wrong expectation, "because," said they, "if we stood still the whole Sunday, our limbs would get quite stiff, and we could hardly work on Monday, whilst with the Sunday dance the muscles are kept at work continuously, and on Monday morning we are just as nimble with them as ever."

The young men take their first stand in the dance according to local rules of their own. In most places the lads of the village form among themselves a kind of brotherhood, the ablest dancer at the head of it; if the brotherhood accepts him, the lad takes his place among the others. The village dance is entirely at the will and command of the young men of the place (the *flăcăi*); they organise the dance, they appoint the musicians, they overrule the dances and often the dancers too; the flăcăi are the undisputed masters of the dancing ground on a Sunday or holiday.

The girl begins to take part in the dance when her father and mother permit it; when the girl is on the threshold of the marriageable age; when the *zestrea* is nearly finished, when she is fairly acquainted with her several housewifely duties. Then she is allowed to take part in the dance, and she goes there, shy and fearful, and looks archly for the lads to come and ask her to dance.

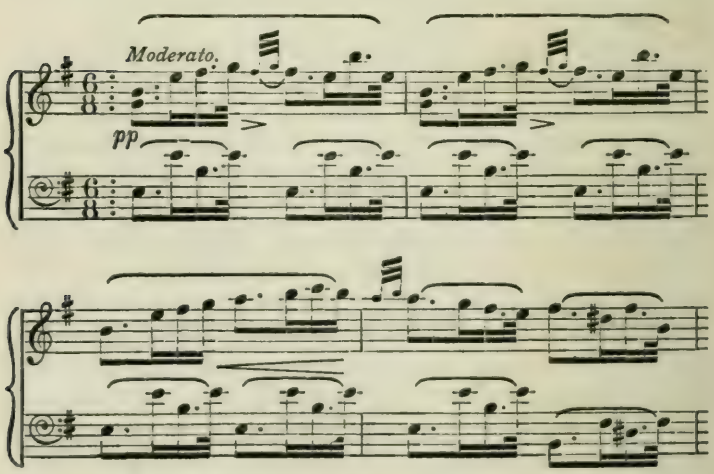
It is always the flăcăi that open the dance, the leader of the dance and some of the boldest joining him. In places, there are regulations as to the stepping into the dance; in other places again, freedom rules: every one begins when he or she chooses, the girls never waiting

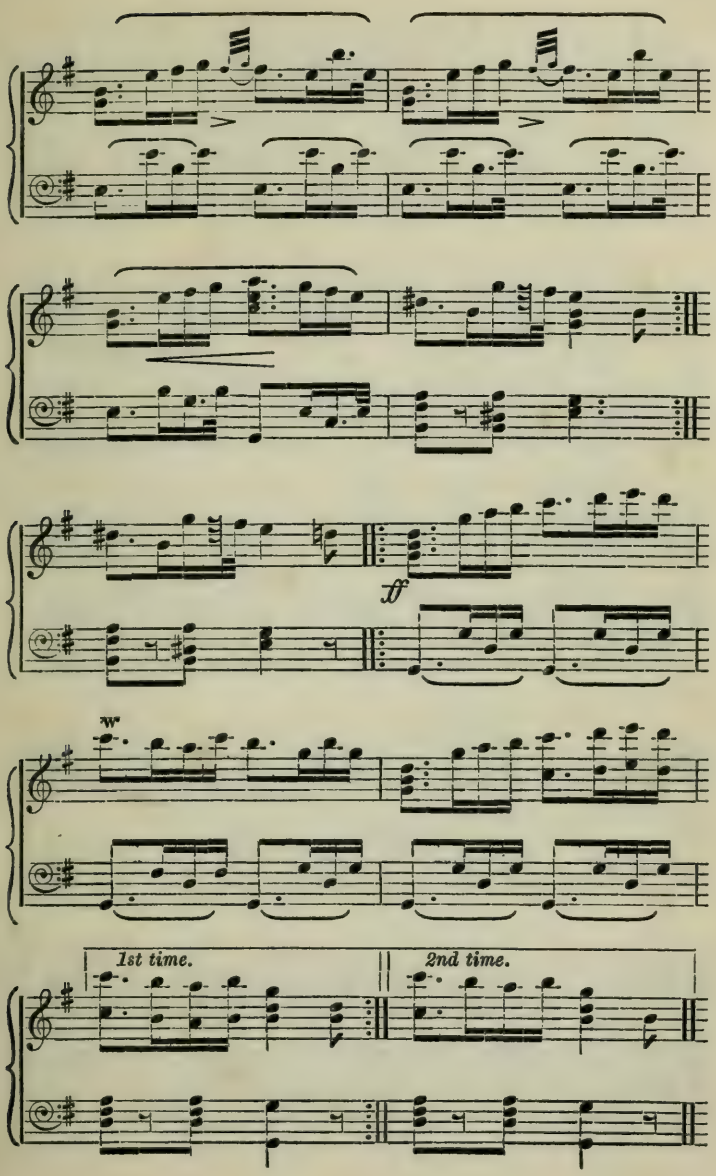
to be asked, but just taking for partner another girl, while a lad will dance just as simply with another lad. The dance is for the young folk; married people dance also in many places, and even older ones, but this rather happens in cases when some jolly old fellow has had a glass too much, and wants to make a fool of himself, then the young will use him as their butt. In other places, however, the married men and women take part in the dance only towards the end of the day, when the young have begun to disperse; in other places, again, they only dance after dark in the public-house. In some places I have come across local regulations that young men were not to dance with married women, because blood had been shed on that score.

As may be expected, a good deal of flirtation goes on through, and between, the dances, and in this respect also local character is very varied. Most respectable and reserved in some places, manners become much freer in others. Courtship begins from the handkerchief: the lad will try his best to take off this Sunday adornment from the girl he cares for, and for that purpose will push her, and pull her, and struggle with her a good deal. With great pride will he then wipe his brow with the stolen handkerchief! Next comes the girdle (the *bete*), also to be taken away from the girls, and worn during the week by the victorious lads. And girls act as if they minded, and sometimes they do mind in earnest; often also strifes and fights among lads will be brought about by those bete. In places, manners are free at the dance: kissing, and pinching, and bustling; and, if you ask the girls about it, they do not seem to think it very proper either, but they give this explanation: "The lads are the masters of the dance, they pay the musical band, they give the invitations, and if you would not 'joke' (*a şugui*), that is to say, flirt with them, they would not ask you to dance any more! Or, if you do not 'joke' with all those who want to, you may never get the chance of a dance, and they will play you all sorts of bad turns, so that, whether you like it or not, you must submit and 'joke' with the lads at their wish and will." This

seems to be one of the draconic laws of the dance in general.

The popular dances are many and very varied, but few of them are genuinely national. Among these, the more universal dance among Roumanians, the national dance *par excellence* is the *Hora* from *Chorus*, thing and name coming down from the Romans—for a long time the chief dance of all classes; turned out now from drawing-rooms, it still prevails at the village dances. The hora is danced in a circle, the dancers holding each other by the hand, and moving with rhythmical steps, now to the right, now to the left, the arms swinging in cadence. It is again the lads that start it; then the bystanders will gradually join, each when he chooses and where he chooses, until the circle grows so large that sometimes it has to be broken into two concentric circles, the band taken to stand in the middle and play the tune of which the rhythm is uniform, the melodies, however, being very varied. One of the finest printed horas is the so-called *Hora Sinaïa*, composed on popular melodies:—

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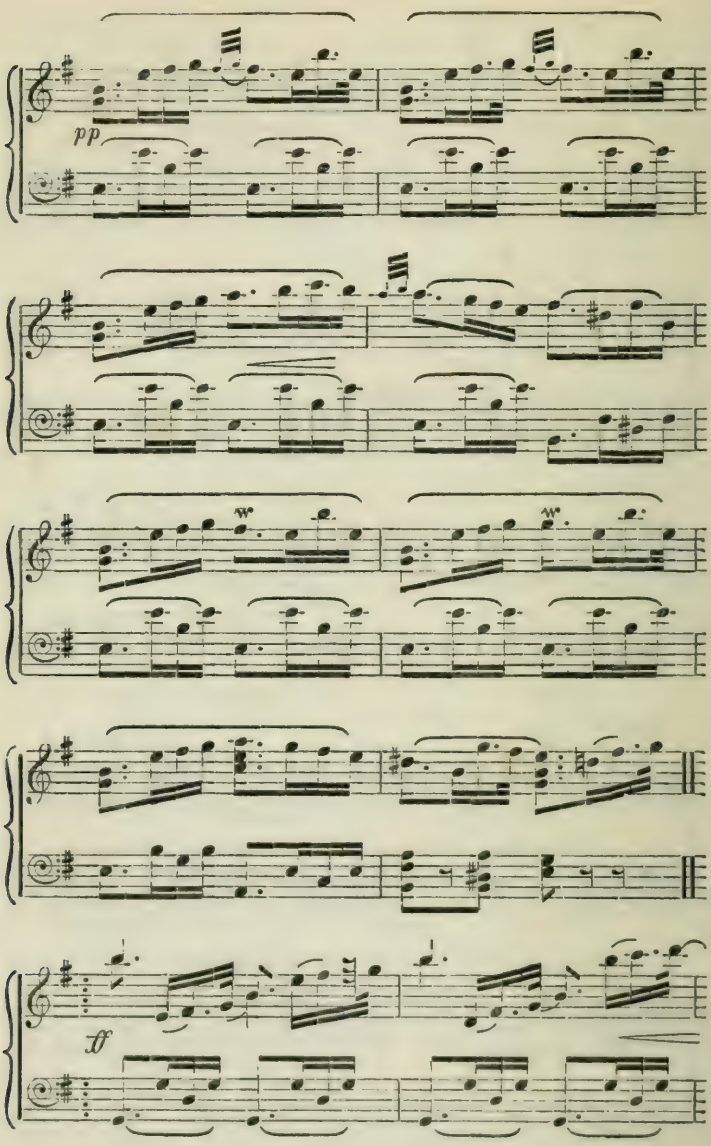
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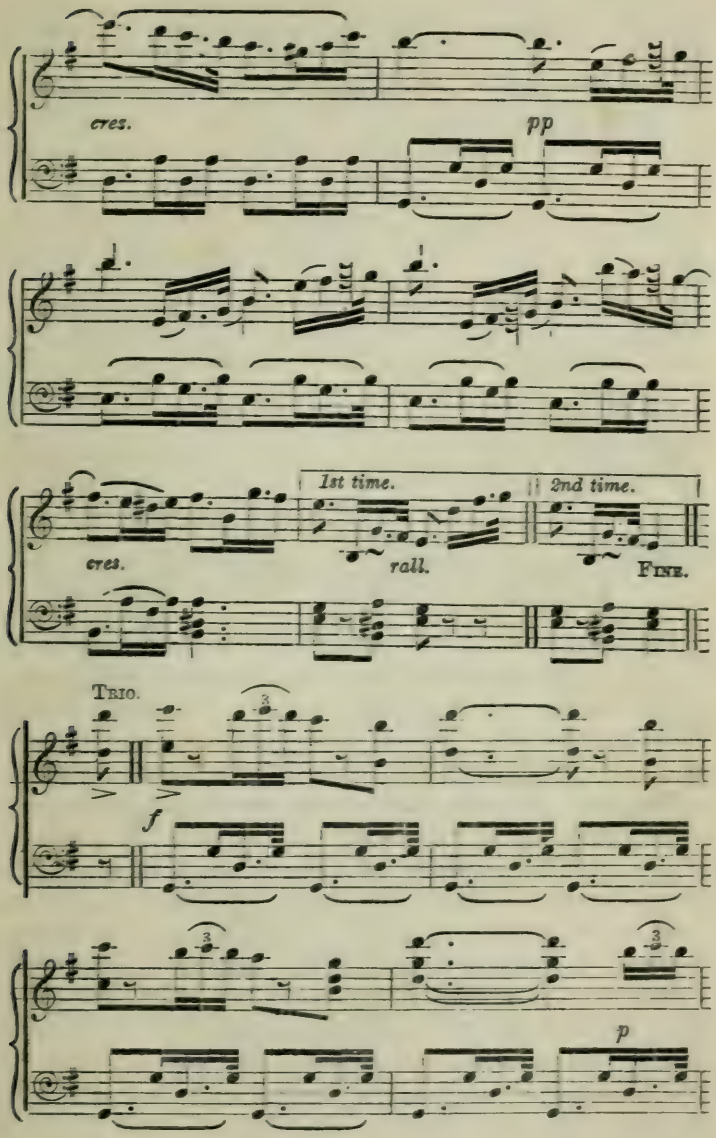
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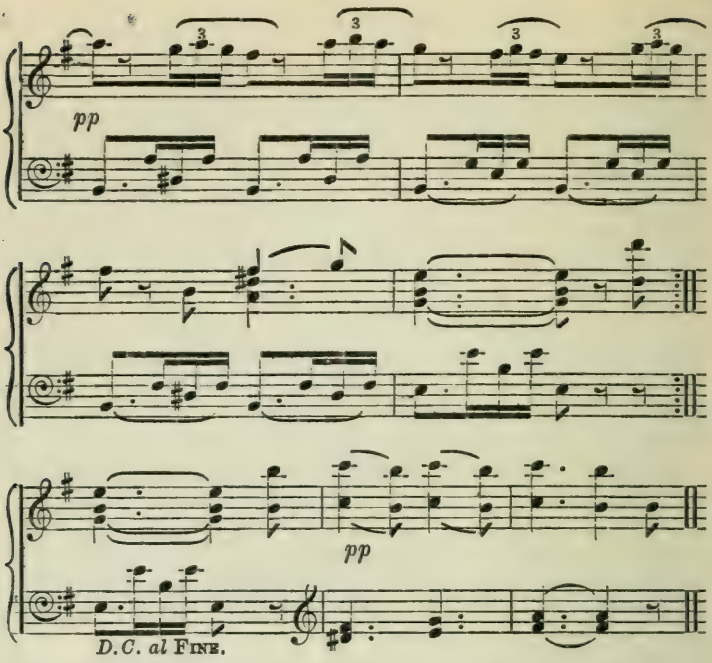


The hora, like other dances, also is accompanied by spirited verses, recited in an energetic tone to the rhythm of the dance, rather shouted out, by the leader of the dance usually, the "lion" of the place; these verses are called *strigături* ("shouts,") and have a caustic epigrammatic point in them, directed not exactly at persons but rather at faults of behaviour, or character in general; if any one happened to be hurt at them, so much the worse for him. These verses are improvised very often, or at least changed or added to, so that one may always happen to hear new ones. The musicians contribute verses, too, of a very coarse character sometimes, they being gipsies and not much acquainted with modesty or shame. Sometimes, too, they may become a subject of strife, if there happen to be two or more lads clever at them in the same place; then they will exert all their power to overcome each other in the best verses—the strife may sometimes end in blows. These *strigături* are sometimes mere jokes, with some rather innocent allusions, like:—

"Mother has sent me from home
To dance with the fairest girl;
I danced with the ugliest
For she had the finest shift;" *

or a chivalrous compliment to some fair girls :—

"Mother sent me to the dance
Flint and fire!
To dance with the fairest maid
Flint and tinder!
But out of the three who is to see
Whichever the handsome be
Ever so, lads!" †

On the other hand, they may have a much weightier import, as to misconduct, like this :—

"Green leaf of a peony,
Neither this autumn will I wed
But will remain a grown calf
Beside those who have married,
For the married ones have wives,
And they will not let me die." ‡

Or a wondering hint about some girl who has entered the dance before knowing housework :—

---

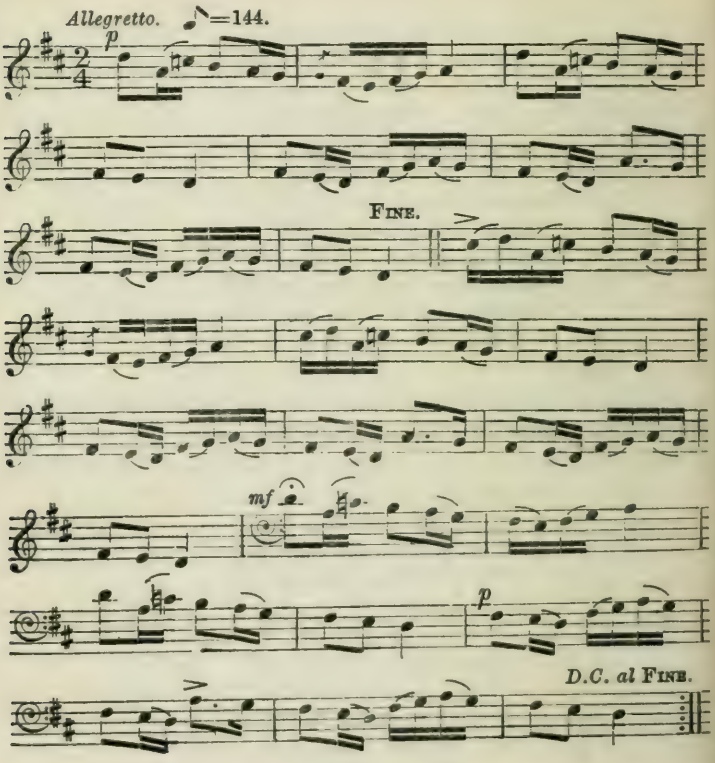
* "M'a trimes mama de-acasă
Să joc fata cea frumoasă;
Eu am jucat cea mai hâdă
C'avea camaşa mai mândră."

† "M'a trimes mama la joc
Cremene şi foc!
Să joc fata cea frumoasă
Cremene şi iască!
Dar din trei cine le-a şti
Cea frumoasă care-a fi
Tot aşa, copii!"

‡ "Frunză verde de bujor,
Nici la toamnă nu mă'nsor
Ci rămâiŭ vitel mânzat
P'ângă cei ce s'o' nsurat,
Că 'nsuraţii au femei,
Nu m' or lasă ei să pieiŭ."

"Ehe, the poor tidy one
With a shuttle she can't thrust
With the wood-frame also not
But to the dance, go on, go on!" *

But if the rhythm of the *hora* is the same, the *tempo* is very much varied; there are slow ones, and quicker ones, and very quick ones like the following, a very widespread melody of *hora*.



* "Hei saraca neteda
Cu suveica nu ştii' da
Cu vatala tot aşa
Dar la joc haida, haida!"

To which the following text is sung:—

"'Said my love that he would come
As soon as the moon will rise:
I go out, the moon is high,
My love came, and is gone back.

'I go out, the moon is low,
My love has come back no more.
Where are you, O my dear love,
That you keep me waiting thus?'

'Be quiet, maiden, I have come
Ever since the moon arose,
And await thee behind the house
Under the weeping-willow.'

'If you have come you are welcome
O my rose, dearly beloved,
With thee I solace myself,
And forget my heavy grief.'" *

---

* "'Zis-a badea[1] c'a veni
Luna când a răsări:
Ies afară, luna-i sus
Badea a venit și s'a dus.

'Ies afară, luna-i jos
Badea nici că s'a întors.
Unde ești, bădiță frate
De mă lași pe așteptate?

'Taci leliṭo,[2] c'am venit
De când luna s'a ivit
Și te-astept pe după casă
Sub răchita cea pletoasă.'

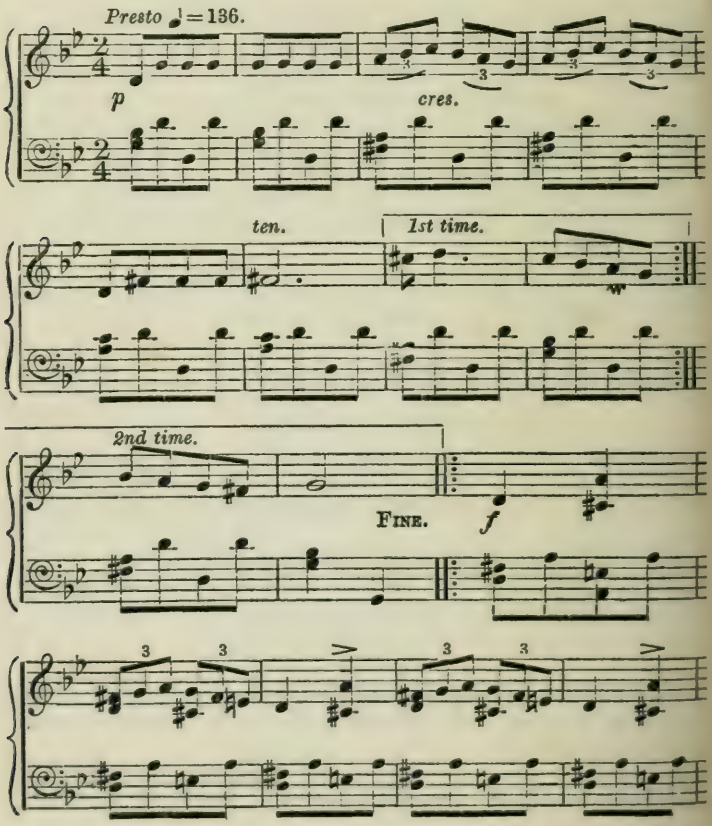
'De-ai venit, bine-ai venit
Trandafirul meu iubit!
Că cu tine mă mai ieu
De-mi alin nacazul meu!'"

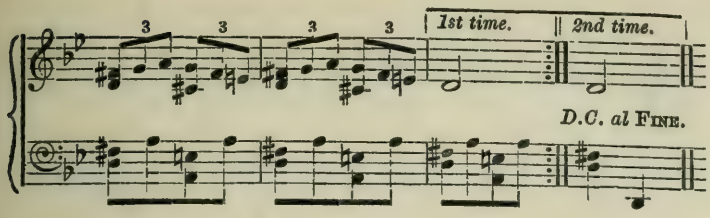
---

[1] *Badea* is the polite appellation for a peasant, as *Domnul*, mister, or sir, is for the gentle folk; I translated it by "my love," as giving the exact meaning here.

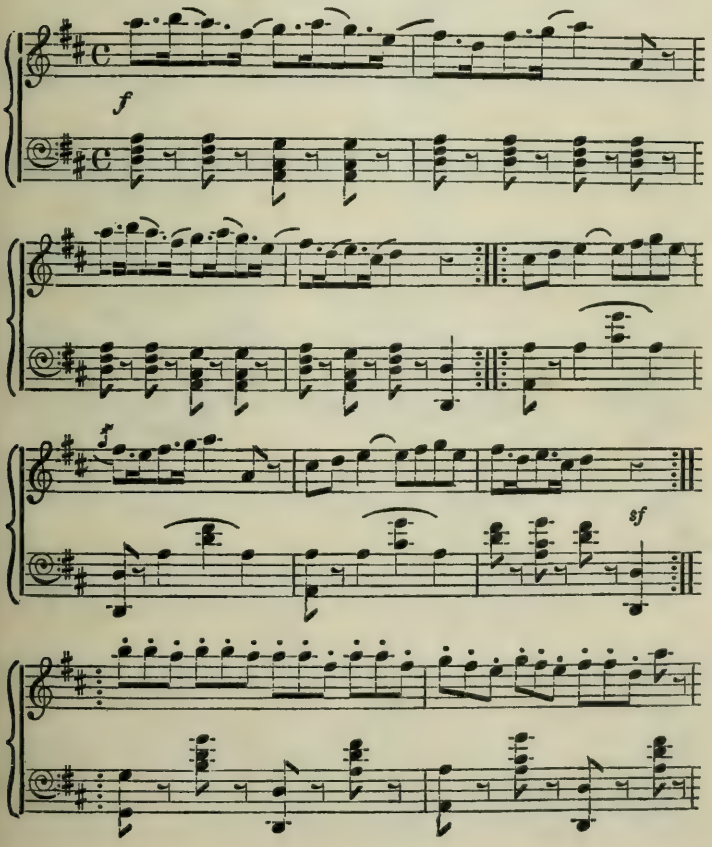
[2] *Leliṭo*, imperative dim. of *lelea*, polite appellation addressed to a woman of the people.

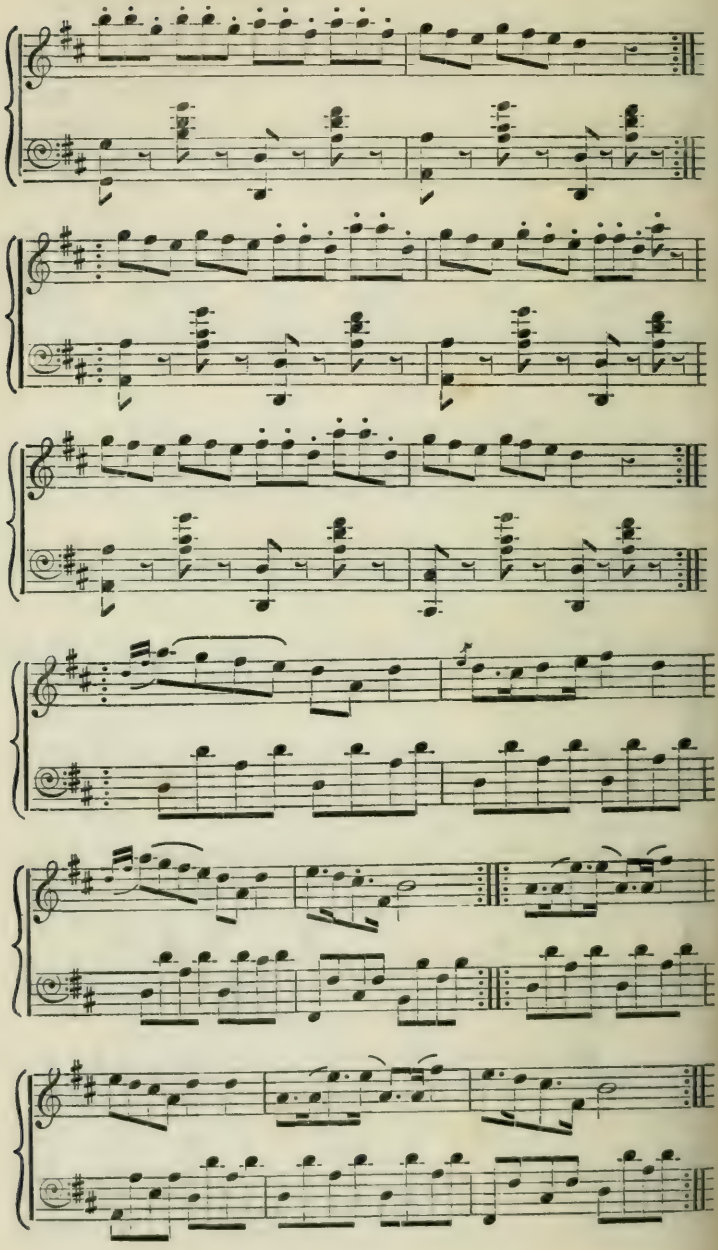
The *hora* can be very quick and spirited, and then it can turn without transition into a second national dance, also very widespread among Roumanian peasants, the so-called *De brâu*, in which the dancers hold tight to each other, every one having his left hand in the girdle of his neighbour (hence the name "by the girdle") and his right one on the other's shoulder. Sometimes they hold each other only by the shoulders. The dance is very animated, and the heels are much at work. It is especially a dance for men, but women will join often enough. The tunes of the *De brâu* are very varied; the one just described will do for a *De brâu* as well as for a *hora*, or this one, among many:—





The *De brâu* is danced in a bow shape, sometimes also in a closed circle. There are several varieties of the *De brâu;* a rather elaborate form of it, with various figures, is the so-called *Bătuta* ("the beaten one"), also a national dance, the music of which is like this—





Beside these almost general national dances, there are an infinity of local ones, some original, others borrowed from neighbouring nations. The *Ardeleanul*, said to be very similar in step and melody to the Italian "Tarantella," the *Mocăneşte*, are mostly Transylvanian dances, together with many others; then there are the *Rusasca*, the *Căzăceasca*, numerous *Sârbe*, all borrowed or imitated from beyond the frontiers, and a number of local dances. In the vicinity of towns, it is not unusual to see clumsy imitations of the town dances.

FIG. 1.—COBZA.

FIG. 2.—TELINCA.

FIG. 3.—TRISCA.

There is also among the national dances the dance of the *Calusheri*, but this is more of a theatrical dance and will be spoken of by and by.

The musical band is almost invariably composed of gipsies *lăutari*, two of them at least, one playing the fiddle, the other the *cobza* (Fig. 1), or lute, which gives the accompaniment. The *cobza* may be considered as a national instrument, although the name is Slav, the thing itself being Arab; made up of a resounding case with ten chords touched by a feather plectrum. But the

national instruments *par excellence*, are wind instruments. Several varieties of whistle, like the *telinca* (from Latin *tilia*, lime-tree, of which it was originally made—Fig. 2), a plain tube of elder or willow tree, fastened with two bindings of string or cherry rind, of some 65 cm. length; the *trişca* (Slav. *trochka*—Fig. 3) a reed whistle, 25 cm. in length, with six lateral holes, the notes being produced

Fig. 5.—Fluer cu dop.

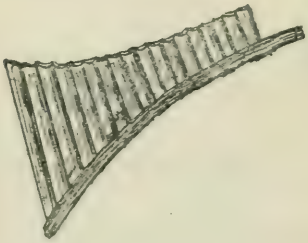


Fig. 6.—Naiŭ.

Fig. 7.—Bucium.

Fig. 4.—Caval.

by stopping them with the fingers; the *caval* (Fig. 4) or shepherd's whistle, usually of plane-tree wood, bound at the extremities to prevent splitting, provided with six lateral holes: the length of this whistle is variable, going up to 85 cm. and 5 cm. in diameter; its tone is pleasant and melancholy. Besides the three plain whistles, there is the *fluer cu dop* (Fig. 5), whistle with a stopper,

allowing only a thin passage for the breath. The *naiü* (Fig. 6) or *moscal*, is a national instrument also, and is composed of a series of tubes of varied lengths, up to twenty of them, bound together, played upon with great

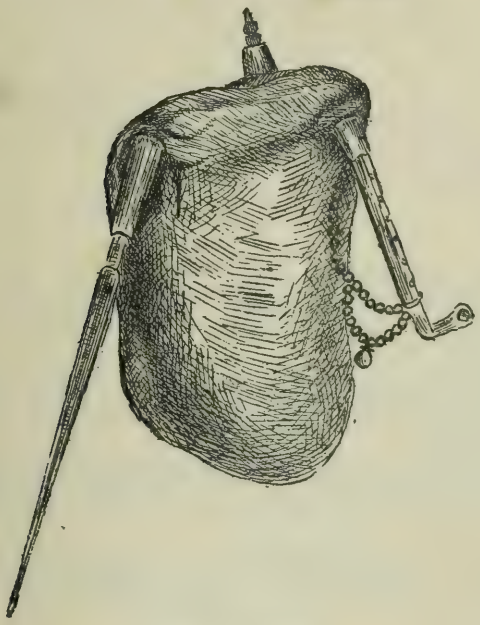


Fig. 8.—Cimpoĭ.

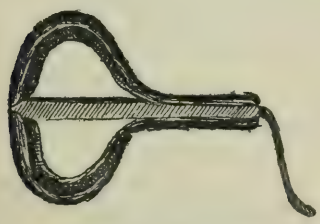
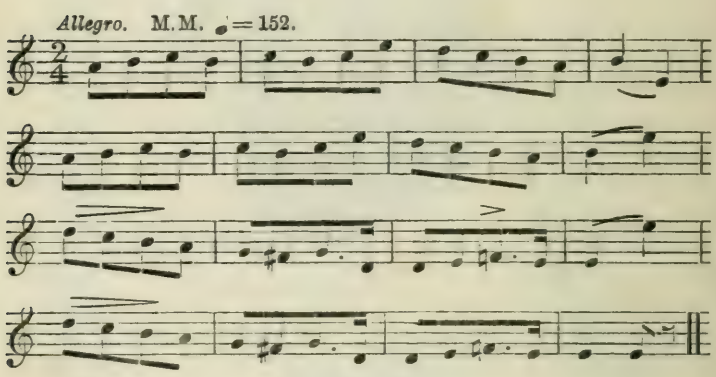


Fig. 9.—Drâmba.

art. The *bucium*, or *bucin* (Fig. 7, from Lat. *buccina*), which is nothing but the Alphorn, seems to be falling into disuse, only rarely used by shepherds up in the mountains. The *corn* (horn), made of animal horn, is much used, but only as a calling instrument in woods

and mountains. The *cimpoĭ* (Fig. 8), or bag-pipe, is common enough, but much plainer to look at in its natural skin than the gorgeous Scotch bag-pipe. But the Roumanian peasant is ready to enjoy himself with as simple an instrument as the *drâmba* (Fig. 9), the jews-harp, on which he will "say" his tune by keeping it between the teeth; he will even play the loveliest melodies on no more than a green leaf pressed against his lips; and what lively dances will be led to the sound of so plain an instrument by the spirited shepherd boys on the heights!



1. "At the hut with the high cross, lad O my lad,
   By the eye-browed Stancutza, „ „
   There goes round the full *hora*, „ „
   Bewitched the men rush in. „ „

2. The wine is good, the measure big, „ „
   The braves drink to dry the world,* „ „

---

* 1. "La bordeiu cu crucea naltă, bădică, bădică [1]
   La Stăncuța sprincenată, „ „
   Joacă hora încheiată, „ „
   Curge lumea fermecată. „ „

2. Vinu-i bun, ocaua mare „ „
   Beau voinicii pe sacare „ „

---

[1] *Badica*, dim. from *bade*, means "little master" or "my lad"—refrain returning after each verse.

They have no heart to depart, lad O my lad,
Night overtakes them by her. ,, ,,

3. Who passes by will stop short, ,, ,,
On seeing her, he gets mad, lad ,, ,,
Drinks wine, pours out his purse ,, ,,
And, my troth, he will not mind. ,, ,,

4. Whoever comes with four oxen ,, ,,
Will go home only with two, ,, ,,
And whoever comes on horseback ,, ,,
Goes with the saddle on his back. ,, ,,

5. But whoever comes on foot, , ,,
He will drink all about him, ,, ,,
And goes well pleased, without coat, ,, ,,
And goes well pleased without coat."* ,, ,,

If dancing is the chief Sunday pleasure of the young, *drinking* is the pleasure of the grown-up and the old. No Sunday without *wine*, and wine is really delicious only at the public-house; a peasant will never drink his wine at home, except on very special occasions. On Sunday the peasants meet at the public-house as early as possible, and will be still there late in the day. The staple drink of the Roumanian people has always been wine; an alcoholic beverage, the *rachiu*, is very wide-

---

* Nu se 'ndură să se ducă, bădică, bădică
Neaptea la dânsa i-apucă. ,, ,,

3. Cine trece, se opreste, ,, ,
Cît o vede 'nebuneste, ,, ,,
Bea vin, punga-si cheltueste ,, ,,
Si zău că nu se căieste. ,, ,,

4. Cine vine 'n patru boi ,, ,,
Se 'ntoarce numai cu doi, ,, ,,
Cine vine de calare ,, ,,
Pleacă cu saua 'n spinare. ,, ,,

5. Iar pe jos ori-cine vine, ,, ,,
Îsi bea tot de lîngă sine ,, ,,
Si se duce gol cu bine, ,, ,,
Si se duce gol cu bine." ,, ,,

spread now, and, although said to be of comparatively recent origin, seems to be fast taking the place of wine, unfortunately. A beginning is being made for the introduction of the much less alcoholic beer, but its advance is extremely slow, being as yet an expensive drink, on the outside slopes of the Carpathians, at least.

The Roumanian peasant is very sociable and fond of company; at the public-house he meets with friends, and, if he has a few pence in his purse, he won't be happy unless he has treated *cinstit* ("honoured") his friends; every one doing the same in turn, it will not be long before everybody present has his blood in his head, especially as the spirits sold in the popular bars are of very inferior quality, insufficiently distilled, and very often adulterated—when the innkeeper is a Jew, at least, for the Roumanian considers it a sin to increase his profits in that way. Once heated, the man, even if he had some idea about the evils of drink, will forget all about it; besides, the very air is so infected with the scent of the spirits and wine in the bar-room, that one unaccustomed would surely get drunk by merely sitting down there for a few hours together. They talk, they tell stories, they laugh, they sing, getting more and more excited, until they have entirely forgotten the wisdom of their own saying:—

"Drink, but do not drink thy sense." *

The sense is drunk down, it gets dimmer and dimmer, the physical need has got the upper hand, as:—

"The more you drink, the more you want to." †

Moreover, the innkeeper stands there with his tankard always full, inviting, stimulating, for—

---

* "Să bei, dar să nu-ți bei mințile."

† "De ce bei, de ce-ai mai bea."

"The wealth of the innkeeper
Is at the bottom of the glass."*

And so it comes to pass that Sunday evening you will hardly meet with a man who, if not altogether drunk, is not at least *afumat*, "fumed" with drink. But, except on Sunday or holidays, it is extremely rare to meet a tipsy man, or to see customers at the village inn on a week-day. The Roumanian peasant drinks on Sunday, and that because he does not meet with any other kind of recreation or pleasant refreshment to take. People who work incomparably less than the peasant do, nevertheless, feel the need of recreation and pleasure; and people who have at their disposal much more numerous ways of enjoying themselves choose the glass deliberately—drink must then have some decided power of causing happiness! And here comes in the second cause of the peasant's addiction to drink, namely, he wants to forget his troubles and hardships, and nothing can help him in that way, it would seem, better than drink:

"A tipsy man believes himself emperor;" †

and no drink is better for that purpose than *rachiu*, of which two or three glasses will be sufficient to work the desired effect, whilst it would require bottles of wine to do the same. The troubles are thus forgotten, drowned in the glass, for the day, at least. Of course it may be worse next day, for the money spent or the debt incurred will make a deeper hole in the already ragged budget; then the wife will scold and shout, and the peasant will take advantage of that to go and drink again in spite of the scolding wife, and, what is worse, the latter will sometimes go and drink too, in spite of her husband, and it is known that the wife's drunkenness brings worse misery on the house and much sooner than man's. And, surely, poverty contributes a great deal towards the

---

* "Averea crâsmarului
În fundul paharului."

† "Omul beat se crede m'parat."

prevalence of drunkenness. As a rule the peasant is badly fed, though his work is hard; he feels weak, a glass of spirits is a capital stimulant; the man begins to believe in its strengthening powers, and little by little he forms the habit of drinking. In the vicinity of towns temptation is always at work. The peasant will go to town with a cart of firewood for sale, or a little flock of geese, or lambs, and so on. He drives these about town all day long sometimes, receiving all the time mock offers considering his expectations, for his ware; he has no time to eat; but a glass of whisky will sustain him. And not seldom, either, his customer will be some Jew innkeeper who will by and by take back all the money he has given for the goods; and how is the poor man to return home sober?

Of course it cannot be denied that there is real vice, too, only this is the exception, not the rule. This kind of drunkenness has always been abhorred by the Roumanian peasant; being a recognised drunkard is considered a great shame, and numberless are the taunting expressions to designate a drunkard. It is also considered as a misfortune, as a disease, as indeed it is; such a drunkard is an *om pătimaș*, he is possessed by a *patimă*, a low passion or a disease; for such a drunkenness there is no cure, the popular proverb tells us—

"Drunkenness is cured by spade and shovel." *

But drink is not absolutely drunkenness, and a man who gets tipsy occasionally, on a holiday, cannot be put down as a drunkard. Surely, if the conditions of life were improved, if better drink were offered, if more elevating amusements were brought within the peasant's reach, soberness would easily take root, but whilst nothing is done in this respect, in spite of all the gentlemen's societies, which, for these two or three last years have been playing at "temperance work," drink will continue to be the most pleasant change to a poor,

* "Beția, o ecuește sapa și lopata."

worried peasant. So much the more hope there is for the future, that it is not the young men who drink; you hardly ever come across a drinking young man—he would never get a wife if he showed signs of vice; and many a young girl have I heard regretting that he does not, "because," they said, "you marry him thinking you have taken a good man, and in a few years you discover that he has got the "*naravul dracului*" ("the devil's bad habit")! Drunkenness is much more at home in towns, no doubt, but town-people are altogether very different from the peasant.

In dancing and drinking the Roumanian peasant spends his summer holidays, and his winter ones too. Although enjoyments of any kind require money, these amusements are not particularly affected by the state of crops and harvests. Some four years ago in Free Roumania, and generally all over the region round the Carpathians, there were particularly bad harvests. On week-days you met peasants walking about idly, unoccupied, sitting in crowds to mind a few oxen, because there was no work for them; there were no crops to reap, hardly anything to gather in. Yet on Sundays the inns were crowded, inside and outside, and the dance went on in almost every village; and as I felt rather puzzled about it, an old peasant told me the following little story by way of explanation. In some far-away country, he said, there was once upon a time an emperor, who levied hard taxes upon his people, yet wanting still more money, he called his minister and ordered him to raise still higher taxes. The minister obeyed, but subsequently came to tell the emperor that he thought the new taxation was too hard, as the people looked so poor and miserable, and went complaining all over the place. "It does not matter," said the emperor, "let them complain, you must raise the taxes still higher." The minister did so, but came to tell the emperor that he rather feared some revolution, as the people seemed so wretched about it and were weeping and moaning, young and old. "Do they indeed look as if they suffered?" asked the emperor; "well, you may once more raise the taxes." The minister was amazed; how-

ever, he had to follow orders; but to his utmost astonishment he found that the people instead of weeping and complaining any longer had, on the contrary, now taken to amusement, to drink, and rejoicing. But when he went to report to the emperor this new state of things, "Now," said the latter, "you must slacken the yoke and diminish the taxation, for this means that people cannot bear any more!" "And so," the peasant went on to say, "if you have anything worth saving, you will haply find in yourself strength enough to save, whilst, if 'God punishes' us, and misery is down upon us, what can we save? At least we forget our sorrows, and we are the better for it."

Misery may well make one improvident, especially a people who for centuries have been through the most precarious circumstances, under which they could hardly succeed in keeping body and soul together; in this predicament, what could be saved towards a most uncertain future? But it may be in the blood, too; and also in education! And if people much better off, in decidedly happier conditions of wealth and education, are not provident, why should such virtue be expected from the peasant? There are, no doubt, thrifty peasants; but it is none the less true that time may inscribe much progress still on his tablets: in the meanwhile, many a peasant, glass in hand, will sing merrily, though most improvidently:—

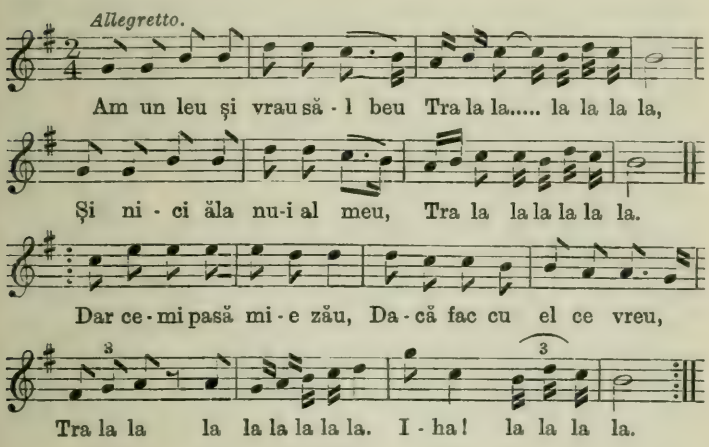
"I have a franc, I want to drink it
Tra la la—la la la la,
And even that one is not mine
Tra la la—la la la la.*

---

* "Am un leu şi vrau să-l beu
Tra la la—la la la la
Şi nici ăla nu-i al meu
Tra la la—la la la la.

But what do I care indeed
If I do with it as I wish
Tra la la la la la la. Iha! la la," *

on the following tune:

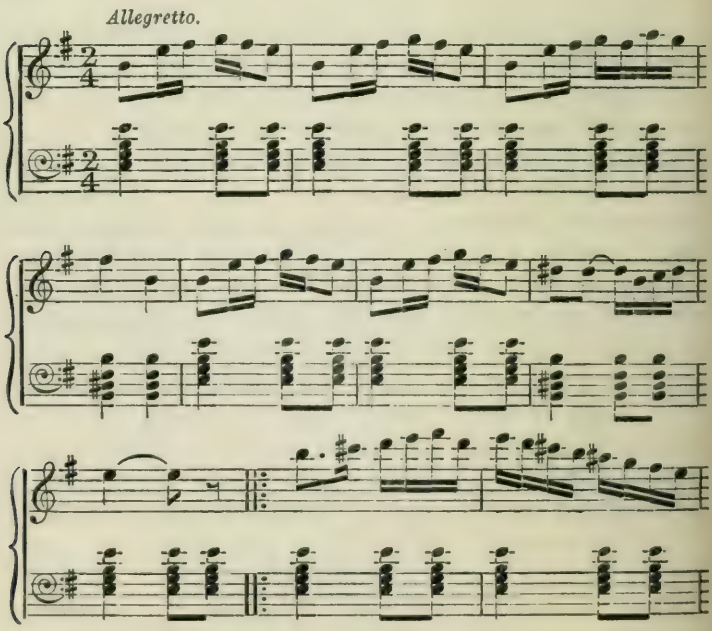


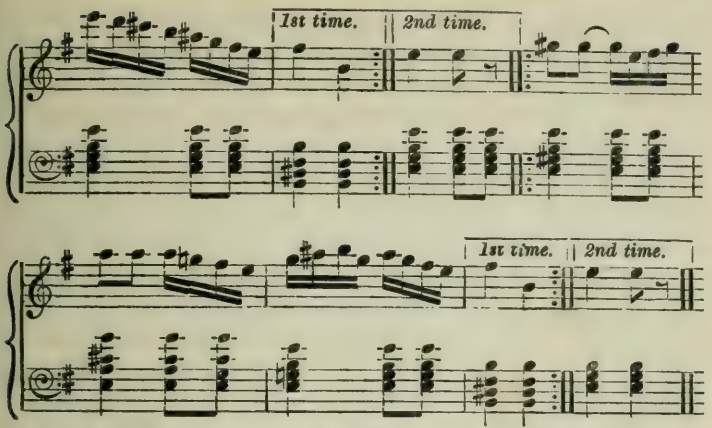
III

Among the Roumanian peasant's amusements there are also theatrical performances, most of them displayed in connection with special holidays or times of the year, some of them universal with the Roumanians. One of the most interesting theatrical performances and at the same time the most puzzling as to origin, is the so-called dance of the *Calusheri*. A group of seven, nine, or eleven men, forming a brotherhood of its own between them, having gone through a special training, and initiated in a sort of mysteries of their own, which they keep entirely to themselves, will gather on Trinity Day, or the *Russalii*, and will start dances which they go about performing from house to house, from village to village, from one district to another. The *Calusheri* were once universal wherever there were Roumanians; now they seem to be relegated to the West of Valachia—the Oltenia—to

* Dar ce-mi pasă mie zău,
Dacă fac cu el ce vreu
Tra la la la la la la. Iha! la la la."

the South of Transylvania and the Banat, but bands of them will go as far as the North of Moldavia. Their dress is the national costume, ornamented with strings of all colours, with flowers, and bells at the knees, each man being also provided with a stick, which they make great use of during the dances. The *Calusheri* are said to be of Roman origin, their performance mimicking the rape of the Sabines in early Rome. Something of that there may surely be in it, so much the more as one of the chief dances is called the *Romanul*, but it appears, nevertheless, that in time the performance has in great measure altered its character, with additions introduced little by little, especially in connection with the superstition about the *Russalii* as evil powers. The *Calusheri* are invested with a kind of supernatural healing power, and the contact with them is supposed to be a preservation against disease, especially at the *Russalii's* hand. Their dances, or rather dancing tours, do not last more than nine days. The most widespread tune of their usual dance is—





Another amusement of still more decided theatrical character is the *Vicleim* (from "Bethlehem") as it is called in Valachia, or the *Irozi* (plur. from *Irod*=Herod), as it is generally called in Moldavia and Transylvania; it is a symbolic representation of Christ's birth, performed during the winter carnival, especially during the Christmas fortnight. This play is much simplified at the present day, and not quite as much cared for as it used to be. The troupe is composed of at least ten persons if not more: Herod, in imperial robes, called *emperor* Herod too, an old grumbling ruler, speaking in harsh tones to his followers; an officer in Roman dress and two soldiers also in Roman attire, but called the *Heleni* (the Helens), always behind Herod, and carrying his ample cloak; the three *Magi*, or wise men, in oriental garb, and a child. The gravity of the scene is mellowed by two comical figures: the *paiaţa* (the clown) and the *moşul*, or old man, the former in harlequin accoutrement, the latter with a mask on his face, a long beard, a hunch on his back, and dressed in a sheep-skin with the wool on the outside. The plot of the play is quite simple. The officer brings the news that three strange men have been caught, going to Bethlehem to adore the new-born Messiah; Herod orders them to be shown in: they enter singing in a choir. Long dialogues ensue between them and Herod, who at last orders them to be taken to prison. But then they address the Heavenly Father, and shout

imprecations on Herod, invoking celestial punishment on him, at which unaccountable noises are heard, seeming to announce the fulfilment of the curse. Herod falters, begs the wise men's forgiveness, putting off his anger till more opportune times. The wise men retire with new songs, still to be heard when they are supposed to be a long way off. Then a child is introduced, who goes on his knees before Herod, with his hands on his breast, asking pity. He gives clever answers to various questions and foretells the Christ's future career, at which Herod stabs him. The whole troupe now strikes up a tune of reproach to Herod, who falls on his knees in deep repentance.

In connection with this religious play there is a decidedly worldly one: the "dolls" (*Păpuşele*), a theatre of miniature puppets, acting on a miniature stage, packed in a box a man can carry on his shoulders, something of the barrel-organ size and shape. The acting is not mere pantomime; there is talk as well, all done by the man who pulls the strings and who suits his voice to the various personages supposed to be talking. This box and stage is also called a *Vicleim*, and the stage represents the gardens of Herod's residence and part of the town square. In the background houses are seen, and Herod sitting on his throne, with his two attendants right and left. The play of the *Irozi* is performed here with the dolls. But besides this performance the dolls have a rich repertory of funny and tragi-comical plays. The chief personages are the keeper of the place, *Moş Ionică* (Uncle Johnny), representative of the popular wisdom and serious satire, and the humorous clown, the *paiaţa*. The subjects of the plays are varied. A parody of hunting, for instance, a huntsman appearing in company with the clown, who ridicules his bad luck. A fight between a Russian and a German—sad reminiscences of the nefarious occupation by Russian or Austrian armies. Then, Turks and Russians, *Moscali*, the Turk, always beaten; a Turkish burial by a Christian popa who consents to make a mock funeral service on the corpse of the deceased Hassan. Allusions to the Russian pro-

tectorate, to the balls given in honour of the Russian officers, ladies talking French, *stâlcind biata franţuzască*, "mutilating the poor French!" Jews, gipsies, beggars, everything that has happened to fall under the satirising eye of the dollman or occurs to his fancy. At the end, *moş Ionică* and his baba appear begging the audience's generosity towards "poor dollman," something "for mouth and for drink" (*pentru gură si pentru băutură*). The "dolls" are supposed to be of pagan origin, from the old Roman satire.

Another amusement of a satirical character, too, is the *Brezaia*, or the *Capra* (the "she-goat"), in which one actor, in some animal's appearance, usually a goat, goes about from house to house, led by several attendants, and, dancing to the sound of some poor fiddle, imitates human follies, often taking as a butt persons of the audience, if they present any peculiarity worth ridiculing. In old Rome, when the triumph of some victorious general was being celebrated, it is notorious that besides the "admiring" *cortège* and the eulogies addressed him, he was also subject to keen satire at the hands of some of his soldiers, who took upon themselves to advertise publicly his faults in satirical verses, as others had praised his virtues; these soldiers are said to have been also got up like animals.

An amusement of rather more recent date, performed also during the Christmas fortnight, catching little by little the popular imagination, is the "Peasant-wedding" (*Nunta ţărănească*), a popular play also, with many actors, the chief ones being a bride and bridegroom, a clown, a priest and a Jew, also with satirical tendency.

These theatrical performances, however, are more and more deserting the villages and receding into towns, mostly as the gain is much more considerable there.

Another amusement, as much at home in towns as in villages, is the traditional *Pluguşorul* ("the Little-plough") going about only on New Year's Eve. A party of young men go from house to house, soon after dusk, at the first lighting of candles, and standing outside the window or door, one of them recites a piece of poetry,

reaching sometimes to as much as five hundred verses, with ever-recurring accompaniment of whip-clashing and unintermitting ringing of a bell which he keeps in his hand, as if to beat time to his oration—*urare*, as it is called. These recitals are very varied, the groundwork on which they are composed being an apotheosis of the agricultural pursuits, in which the usual hero is *Bădica Troïan* ("Master Trajan"); the habitual introduction is: "Aho, aho, plough with twelve oxen!" and the recitation goes on with the regularly repeated refrain of "Now do drive on, fellows, Hăi! Hăi!" in which last shout all present join, as if they really were driving a plough on some hard furrow. Once, the custom was—and in some places it is still so—to have a miniature plough carried about by the party; nowadays, "the

Fig. 10.—Buhaĭ (the Bull).

bull" (*Buhaiul*) is taken instead. This *buhaĭ* (Fig. 10) is made up of a little wooden cask, stopped at one of the ends with a skin bottom, instead of a wooden one, through which a cord of horsehair comes out from the interior. One man draws this cord between his fingers all the time the recitation lasts, producing thus the sound of a bellowing bull, an all prevailing and most unmusical *boo!* The recitation is ended with greetings for New Year and for abundant harvests to the master of the house and his family, and with distributions to the *uratori* ("the greeters") of *colaci*, dried fruit, apples, walnuts, and possibly money. The *Plugushor* is also supposed to be of pagan origin, and namely from the Roman *Opalia*, festivals in honour of *Ops*, the goddess of abundance.

The last theatrical amusement is that performed by the "bear" in person. The "dancing bear" is an amusement of all times, mostly, however, to be met in spring, when the gipsies are not yet busy at field work. The gipsy catches, often with great danger to his life, the bear cub, puts out its eyes, rears and tames it, but never to the extent, however, of being able to lead him without a strong and safe chain. The dancing bears are often to be seen in companies, going from house to house, to dance their steps at the sound of the *dairà* (Fig. 11) or tambourine. It is considered unlucky to turn out a bear, so it is received in every courtyard to dance, and after the performance is presented with a plateful of maize flour and some cheese, of which the gipsy gives some to the bear to eat in his *dairà*, putting the rest

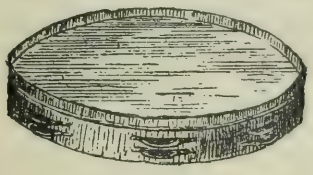


FIG. 11.—DAIRÀ.

carefully by in a special bag. From this willing, and yet compulsory, tribute to the bear, people have formed a proverb to show that an evil coming upon your neighbour may befall you too:—

"The bear dances at the neighbours'" *

—that is: will probably come to us too—and also:

"When you see the bear at your neighbour's, get your flour ready." †

It is believed by the people that the entering of the bear into the house brings luck, so those who wish and

* "Joacă ursul la vecini."

† "Când vezi ursul la vecini, găteşte făina."

can afford to give a richer tip to the gipsy, will ask the bear in and make it lie on the beds, as this would keep out illness. Also peasants who suffer from muscular pains or fever, think it a cure to lie down on one's face and have the bear recline on one's back, or have him tread on one's body and limbs. Besides the dancing, the gipsy will, if the lookers-on pay for it, fight his bear, or if there are two bears, make them fight against each other. Only this is sometimes dangerous, as bears with all their chains are apt to get vicious, and the gipsies will have hard work with their taming sticks to get them down.

IV

The *Şăzătoarea*, (the "Evening gathering") is the great winter amusement of the Roumanian peasants. Field labour draws towards its end with the appearance of *Brumărel* (October), "little-hoar-frost," who comes in with the warning:—

"I am, dear, 'little-hoar-frost,'
I come in the cool evening
To lie on the flower's bosom,
And when I start with the sun
Behind me the flower dies." *

Brumărel gives a first hint at winter, by spreading over nature its thin grey cloak on a clear, starry night. Usually, after the first hoar-frost, the weather settles for a good while as unchangeably fair and bright. The bringing in of the maize is hurried on, together with the gathering of the grapes and the making of the wine. St. Demeter, on the 26th of October, is the close of the agricultural year. One gets ready for the reception

* "Eu sânt, dragă, Brumărel,
Eu vin sara pe răcoare
De mă culc pe sin de floare,
Si când plec voios cu soare
După mine floarea moare."

of the much severer *Brumar* (November), that is the "Hoar," or, rather, the "White-frost."

"Who am I?—The great Brumar;
I fall down by full midday,
I take off the flowers' scent.
And when I take off the scent
I wither also the flowers."*

Brumar, or *Promorar* (from *promoroacă* = white frost), coming on like "a hero on his horse, as white as a snow-flake," covers all nature with white down. But this seems to be rather out of date now; snow is hardly ever as early now as it used to be when our grandfathers were young, as they tell us. Now, November hardly ever looks bright and clear, although there are fair exceptions; as a rule November is the dullest and bleakest month of the year, with a leaden sky above, hardly ever a stray pale sunbeam, with cold and dreary days and the longest nights. But sometimes it happens still, that snow falls in abundance in November, and then, with all the frost and cold, life looks ever so much happier in the short days. But whatever the state of the atmosphere may be, in November the nights are the longest, and the Roumanian peasant willingly spends the half of it in amusement mixed with work. Now in one homestead, now in another, people will gather as soon as candles are lit, to the so-called *şăzătoare*, (from *şădere-sedere*="to sit"), where people are meant to sit down and work at some quiet handwork: combing, carding, spinning of wool, hemp, or flax, or winding of cotton skeins. On the hearth a gay fire is burning, above the flames of which a kettle with boiling maize or corn is simmering invitingly; this is the centre of the gathering. At the back of the hearth the big oven, heated also, contains

* "Cine sânt?—Brumarul mare
De cad ziua 'n prânzul mare
Iau mirosul de la floare
Şi când ieau miroasele
Veştejesc şi florile."

sometimes some big pumpkin and potatoes baking, to be, together with the maize and corn, the refreshment of the assembly, to which are added the sweet-tasting *cucoșei*, or *cucurigi*, maize grains baked in a kettle with sand and some salt, by which process they split and spring into beautiful white flowers. In old times, beside the blazing wood-fire, the room was also lighted by an *opaiț*, a wick dipped into grease melting in some potsherd on the mantelpiece, the *corlata;* nowadays civilisation has ushered petroleum lamps into the poorest cottage.

As a rule, all sorts of people come together at a *șăzătoare;* young girls to work, or pretend to; young men to help them at entangling their skeins, to tease them, to joke and flirt with them; people of all ages, and, if possible, some old man or woman, talkative and clever, with wrinkled face and young heart, with no end of tales up their sleeve. These night-gatherings are varied in character, according to the place; in some places they seem to go on very simply and cordially; in other places the tone seems to be of a coarser kind, and to give opportunities for subsequent rows and fights amongst the young men. So I have come across places where men were not allowed to go to the *șăzătoare*, the women meeting by themselves, and probably doing more work than play—if sleep could possibly be kept away! In other places, I have been told, women were not received in the *șăzătoare*, at least young married women, as bloody rows had been brought about between their husbands and occasional love-makers. In other places, again, these gatherings were looked upon with great contempt by well-to-do peasants, who declared that *their* girls would never go to the *șăzătoare*. On the whole, though, the *șăzătoare* still exists, and is well attended by numerous visitors, with character now strict now loose, with manners now refined now coarse, according to the taste of the people it brings together.

The amusements at the *șăzătoare* are made up of various games, in which the persons present all take an active part, be it together or in turn; of intellectual pastimes, like tale-telling, asking riddles, and various

questions put by one of them to which the audience is expected to give appropriate answers; of puns and puzzling sentences to be repeated by those present, by whose mistakes no end of laughter is provoked.

The popular tales running among the Roumanian peasantry are very numerous; a good many of them have ceased to be oral only, and have been written down by more or less gifted collectors, so that some have still preserved, while others have lost their particular simple narrative character. Although on the whole these tales have a kinship with tales of other peoples and countries, and although the groundwork of these tales is of limited variety, yet the form under which they are presented is extremely varied, and appears as an unmistakable outcome of local beliefs, of personal characteristics, and of local culture. The anonymous tale composer (who is everybody more or less) unconsciously embodies in his tale his own moral or material ideals, the more eagerly in that he hardly ever sees them realised in actual life. As he sits in front of the little-by-little smouldering fire, the tale narrator will carry along with him the enraptured audience into worlds full of sun and of light, the world of the *Feţi-frumoşi* ("handsome youths") in love with some fair—

"Ileana Simziana
From her hair
The flower sings
Nine empires
Listen!" *

meeting with all sorts of difficulties and struggling with all sorts of monsters, mounted on beautiful flying horses, which feed on hot embers and are seers too, and a great help to the beloved rider on their back. The usual foes of *Făt-frumos* are the *zmei* dragons, imaginary beings,

* "Ileana Simziana
Din cosiţă
Floarea-i cântă
Nouă împărăţii
Ascultă!"

the shape of which is entirely left to the fancy of the hearer, very brave and strong, too, but in the end always overcome by the favourite hero. Physical strength is given due consideration, too, but cleverness and intelligence have always the upper hand in the end. Or, if not emperors and princesses, the subjects of tales will be a *baba* and a *moşneag* (an old woman and an old man), with a good daughter and a wicked daughter, put both to various trials from which the result will always be the triumph of the good, the punishment of the wicked. Superstitions and beliefs will find a faithful reflection in tales: men changed into animals by the power of a curse; travelling in "the other world," and so on, without the slightest attention being ever paid to time and space. A very important character again, playing a part in tales, is the celebrated *Păcală* and his congener—perhaps only his "Sosie," his twin *Tândală*. *A păcăli*, means to take in, but for fun mostly, not seriously: cheating is given by *a înşela*. From this verb *Păcală* derives obviously his name, and he will take in everybody, for fun often, but oftener still in earnest. A short humorous tale brings face to face the two personages. Păcală and Tândală happening to meet, both begin complaining about the hardness of the times, and both agree to take service with a priest, who takes them in and appoints the work to be done by each. Păcală is to dig a cellar, and his remuneration will be a *prescură* (a small white loaf of which the consecrated bread is made) for every shovelful of mould thrown out; Tândală is entrusted with the pasturing of a cow, which being, says the priest, an exceedingly meek animal, he could lie down and sleep all day in the grass, and thus was not entitled to any particular salary. But next day it came out that the first man received instead of a little loaf a good blow from the priest for every shovelful, whilst the second had to run all day long after the wildest cow he had ever come across in his life, so that both met in the evening crushed down with fatigue and pain, each thinking, though, that his fate alone had been such a hard one, while surely the other had had all the benefit of the priest's promises. Each now invents the plan of changing

place with the other, so that their meeting was of the highest diplomacy.

"How did you get on?" asked Pâcală.

"Oh, very well indeed; I slept all day, the cow grazing quietly by my side. And you?"

"Capital," answered Pâcală, "I got so many loaves from the priest that I gave a lot of them away in alms. Now that I think of it, I am sorry I did not keep some for you. But no matter; if you like, I can give you my place to-morrow, and go myself with the cow." They go to sleep, each glad of the bargain made. Next day, of course, they felt all the wretchedness of having been mutually taken in, but Tândală was lucky enough, while the priest was away from the cellar, to discover a barrel half full of gold coins. As he could not possibly get out the gold by himself, he imparted the news to his companion, and at night they went together to take the money and run away. But hole and barrel were deep and narrow; only one man could get down. Tândală went in with the bag which he had to fill with money, and then, with the aid of a rope, bag and man had to be drawn up in turn by Pâcală. Tândală, however, filled the bag only half with money, on top of which he stepped himself into the bag, and shouted at Pâcală to draw. Pâcală drew, but instead of lowering once more the rope for his friend, he hastily shouldered the heavy bag, and off he ran, leaving—he thought—Tândală in the hole. Near the skirts of a forest he lay down to sleep, but while he slept sound, Tândală crept out of the bag, took it upon his own shoulders and went away. When Pâcală awoke, he took in the situation at once, but he was not at his wit's end. He stripped the bark from a lime-tree, twisted it and made himself a whip, with which he began to clash fiercely, as if he had been a travelling postillon. At this sound, Tândală, tired and hungry by this time, came forward in no time, hoping to find some relief to both hunger and weariness in the advancing vehicle. One may easily imagine the faces they cut on meeting. They shook hands and acknowledged their equality, and that nobody could ever get the better of them, except one

of another; so they decided to part, and go about taking in the simple, playing practical jokes on them, but not always in mere joke; the simple have, however, sometimes the pleasure of witnessing now and then how a "Pâcală" meets also his "Tândală."

The way of narrating tales is not in the least easy to adopt or to reproduce. In a simple but rich language, full of metaphorical expressions, spread all over with proverbs, there is besides very much of the individual talent of the narrator. As to its form, a tale begins always by some stereotyped words, such as: "There was once, when there was, for if it had not been, it wouldn't be told;" or again: "There was once upon a time, when the small fishes ate the big ones, and people call them thieves;" or, "There was once, when there was, when the flea was shod with ninety-nine pounds of iron at each foot, and got up in the hightness of the skies and felt still light!"

The narrative, in prose, is not seldom interlarded with ever-recurring verses, like—

> "Tale, tale
> There is still a long way ahead;" *

or with words like *înşiră-te mărgărite* ("thread pearls"), the tale being supposed to be told in a *şăzătoare*, where the work done was nothing less than threading of pearls! In some tales, again, versified parts are interspersed.

The end of a tale, like its beginning, is also stereotyped: "And I mounted on a saddle, and told it to you thus;" or, "And I got astride on a rod and told you a lie," and many other endings very often improvised on the spot by the spirited narrator, with a hint towards this or that member of the gathering or of their acquaintances.

Riddles (*cimilituri*) are a very important item in the gatherings. They all begin by the prefixed words: *Cinel*,

---

* "Poveste, poveste
Inainte mult mai este."

cinel, or *Cimel, Cimel*, which seem to mean as much as "Guess!" To give a sample—

"(Guess!) In the wood I was born
In the wood brought up,
To the town when taken
Judge I have been appointed."*
(*The stick.*)

or—

". . . I have a mottled little pot
The cocks crow in it."†
(*The church.*)

"What water is there in the world without sand?"‡
(*The tear.*)

or, again, questions are set, to which an adequate, though not exact answer is expected, as, for instance—

"Which is the longest day?"
"That in which you have nothing to eat."

A special kind of night gathering, in some places about the Carpathians, is the *Vergelul* (the *réveillon*), on the night before New Year. People gather in some house, where they have been invited in good time, as soon as the *pluguşor* business has been done with, or even whilst the young men are still at it. The hostess has prepared a good deal of refreshment and a musical band, one fiddle, at least, will not be wanting. On the stroke of midnight —struck by the cock in the hen-house—a bucket, of quite

---

* "Cinel, cinel: în pădure m'am născut
In pădure am crescut
Şi 'n oras cum m'au adus
Judecător am fost pus."
(*Bătul.*)

† "Cinel, cinel: Am o ulcea pestricea
Cântă cucoşii în ea."
(*Biserica.*)

‡ . . . "Ce apă este în lume fără năsip?"
(*Lacrima.*)

new fir-wood, is brought in full of water and put on the table. Every person in the room gives "a sign," some small object belonging to him or her, a ring, a string of beads, a pipe, a knife, a hairpin, or anything, which articles are all dropped in the bucket. A man then, *vergelatorul*, comes with two green twigs in his hands, and beating with them time on the bucket's edge, recites a New Year's greeting, whilst at his side stands a young boy in clean garments and new sandals, personating the New Year. When the recitation is ended, he thrusts his hand into the bucket, and picks up at random the objects there deposited in turn, the *vergelator* predicting to the possessor of each something more or less witty and amusing. Sometimes the *vergelator* is blindfolded, so that his prophecies come out still more funny and ludicrous. After a final cheer pronounced by the *vergelator*, the water is thrown out and the bucket brought back filled with wine, and the *cinste* begins. A dance closes the proceedings, as it often also does with the common *şăzătoareas*.

V

"Greatly do I really wonder
At the one who cannot sing
How he goes through his own life
For I, indeed, ever sing,
And go through badly enough." *

The last resort, the cheapest pastime of the Roumanian peasant, is his singing. At work or at rest, merry or weary, he will ever strike up a tune, cheerful or sad, according to his state of mind. Not that a traveller should expect to come across voices similar in beauty or strength to the Italian voices; not that he should hear among the Roumanian peasants choirs well regulated

---

* "Mult mă mier eu de acela
Care nu ştie cânta
Cum îşi petrece lumea
Că eu cânt, zău, tot mereu,
Şi-o petrec destul de greu."

in tune and time, as he would among Germans; the Roumanian peasant has hardly ever a good quality of voice, never any training, yet his soul is musical, and he ever feels an impulse to sing.

The chief part of the Roumanian popular song is made up of the words, the poetry; the tune comes only next, and is in a much less advanced stage than the poetry. Most of the popular poetry is not *told*, it is *sung*, or rather it is *said*, the word "to say," *a zice*, being said by the Roumanian peasant to mean also "to sing," as well as "to play": to say a song, to say from the whistle. As samples of the popular poetry as well as of the Roumanian music have been given in the preceding chapters, the reader is fully acquainted with them. Epic, lyric, satiric—poetry as well as prose—all the literary kinds are to be found in the Roumanian folk-lore. Most of the songs begin with *frunză-verde* ("green-leaf"), the peasant poet taking ever as witness to his feeling, a plant, a flower, or a tree; the content of the poetry itself may have nothing whatever to do with the opening invocation, the singer, however, has taken as companion and listener some representative of Nature, the one, which, like himself, is doomed to the most fickle, most uncertain fate: the leaf, prey of all winds. Who has composed the popular poetry, none can tell. Or rather, yes, one can tell that nobody in particular has done it, but that it is the perfectly anonymous creation of the people at large. No name of a minstrel has ever been heard of, old or recent; no singer ever can tell what is the origin of the song he is saying. He invariably has heard it from somebody else. To some extent, however, the making of popular poetry can be traced: one boy or girl learns a song, then, be it by forgetfulness, or under pressure of some individual feeling, he adds something of his own; the song grows, time often will make several pieces of it, and thus the songs increase in number and bulk. There are splendid and there are inferior pieces in the popular poetry; there is also much low trash; all this, however, only the work of the gipsy *lăutar*, or else, and perhaps still more, of the town dweller; as for the real peasant

poetry, it is ever as clean, as fresh, as pure as the Nature under whose direct influence they live, as the very fresh air they are breathing.

There is a large amount of popular poetry collected already; there is, perhaps, more to be collected yet; at any rate, the composing power of the people does not seem in the least exhausted yet, and education, let us hope, in its slow advance, will find its way to do its work without extinguishing under its flat formalism the genius of the Roumanian nation.

Let us hope in good time a merrier note may be struck by the Roumanian singer at large, but for the time being, the most popular, the most far and wide-spread song, the song *par excellence* of the Roumanian nation is a doleful one; it is the *Doïna* (supposed to originate from the Latin *doleo*, *dolina*, or else from the Dacian *Daïna*) song, in which the Roumanian popular singer has put his soul, to bewail his own multifarious woes; tune as well as poetry strongly wedded together, the poetry often varying, the tune always the same; the song with which the Roumanian peasant drives away his sorrows; the song which has the power of making him fancy he has paid off both taxation and labour:—

"With the *doïna* I pay off
The taxation and the labour!" *

the song which is the strongest expression of infinite pain:—

"He who invented the *doïna*
Burnt out must have been his heart,
As it is just now with me!" †

---

* "Eu cu doina mă plătesc
De bir şi de boieresc!"

† "Cine a stârnit doina
Arsă i-a fost inima
Ca şi mie acuma!"

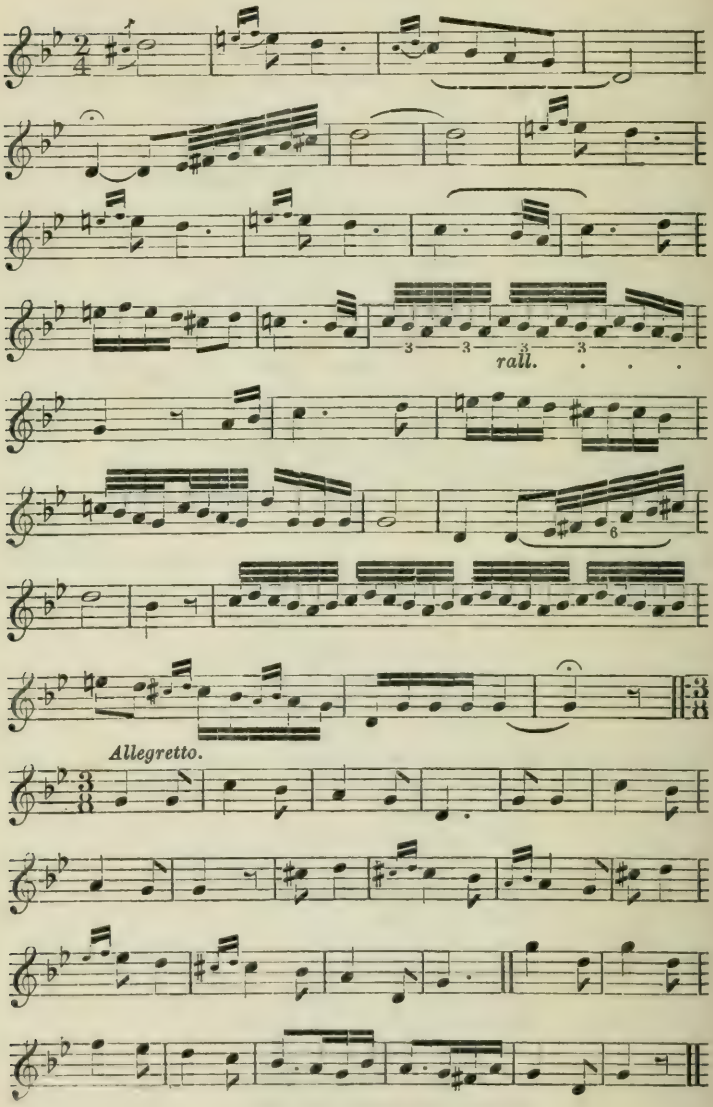
the song, which, from the top of the Carpathians, comes down rilling in infinite waves of wailing :—

"Doïna, Doïna, sweet song!
When I hear thee, to stay I long—
Doïna, Doïna, fiery tune,
When thou soundest I stand still.
When the wind of spring is blowing
I sing the doïna out of doors,
That I may lisp with the flowers
And with the sweet nightingales.
Comes the winter with its storms,
I sing the doïna indoors,
To sweeten with it my days,
My days and my dreary nights.
The leaf shoots out in the wood,
Doïna of bravery I sing—
The leaf falls down in the vale,
I sing the doïna of wail.
Doïna I say, doïna I sigh,
With the doïna I keep myself.
Doïna I sing, doïna I whisper,
With the doïna alone I live!" *

---

* "Doină, doină, cântec dulce!
Cînd te-aud nu m'aș mai duce.
Doină, doină, viers cu foc
Când răsuni eu stau în loc.
Bate vânt de primavară
Eu cânt doina pe afară,
De mă' ngân cu florile
Și privighitorile.
Vine iearna viscoloasă
Eu cânt doina 'nchis în casă,
De-mi mai mângâi zilele
Zilele și nopțile.
Frunza 'n codru cât învie
Doina cânt de voinicie.
Cade frunza jos în vale,
Eu cânt doina cea de jale;
Doina zic, doina suspin,
Tot cu doina mă mai țin
Doina cânt, doina șoptesc
Tot cu doina viețuesc!"

—the song which the lonely shepherd on the height "*doineşte*" ("doïns") on his whistle thus:



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